

SPECIAL DEBATE NUMBER

# CONGRESSIONAL DIGEST

August-September, 1933

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## The American vs. The British System of

### Radio Control

How Each System Has Been Developed  
Comparison of the Two Systems Today  
The Attitude of Congress Toward Radio

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Should America Adopt the British System?

### Pros and Cons

by Educators, Officials, Business Men



WASHINGTON, D.C.

FIFTY CENTS A COPY



# THE CONGRESSIONAL DIGEST

FAMOUS FOR ITS PROS AND CONS

N. T. N. ROBINSON  
Editor and Publisher

ALICE GRAM ROBINSON  
Founder

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## CONTENTS THIS MONTH

### The Question Should America Adopt the British System of Radio Control?

#### FACT MATERIAL

	Page
Safeguarding the Ether—The American Way, by U. S. Senator Dill .....	194
Safeguarding the Ether—The British Way, From Annual Report of B.B.C. ....	195
In Case America Should Adopt a Foreign System—An Estimate by the F.R.C. ....	196
How Radio is Operated in Other Countries .....	197
How the American System is Set Up Today .....	198
How the British System is Set Up Today .....	199
Congress and the Question of Radio Control .....	200

#### PRO AND CON ARGUMENTS

##### THOSE FAVORING

Jay Elmer Morgan, Chairman, National Committee on Education by Radio .....	202
Sir John C. W. Reith, Director-General, B.B.C. ....	205
Lord Passenby, Member of British Parliament .....	212
R. W. Postgate, British Author .....	214
Tracey F. Taylor, Secy., Natl. Committee on Education by Radio .....	218
The "Round Table," Beloit College Publication .....	220
Sir Charles Higham, British Advertising Agent .....	222

##### THOSE OPPOSING

Hon. Harold A. Lefount, Member Federal Radio Commission .....	203
Henry Adams Bellows, Ph. D., V. Pres., C. B. S. ....	205
William S. Parley, Pres., C. B. S. ....	211
Willard Hord, Author, News Commentator, N. B. C. ....	212
G. Henry Warren, British Author .....	217
Dr. Herman S. Mottinger, Mem. of Faculty, Wharton School of Bus., U. of Pa. ....	221
E. M. Kirby, Advertising Agent .....	223

NOTE: The Regular features have been suspended this month to allow more space for debate material.

This Month's Sources .....	224
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# THE CONGRESSIONAL DIGEST

## The Question This Month:

### Should the United States Adopt the British System of Radio Control?

#### Foreword

RADIO broadcasting "reform" will be a much discussed topic during the next few months. The National Extension University Association and the National Forensic League have chosen for their annual debate topic for 1933-34 the question of whether the United States should adopt the essential features of British radio control.

This was done by these two organizations, which cover some 28 states, at the instance of the National Committee on Radio in Education, representing a group of educators who are also appealing to Congress to make a special investigation of radio at home and abroad.

The point made by this organization is that, under the system of private operation of radio obtaining in America the use of radio for education is sorely neglected, and is held subordinate to the use of radio for purely commercial purposes. They express the view that a thorough investigation by Congress of American and foreign broadcasting methods would lead to legislation correcting what they consider to be the main evils of the American system—commercialism in general and advertising in particular. Their basic aim is to secure more radio time for education.

The British system is presented by these educators as a system worthy of imitation by America, because in England the faults mentioned as being characteristic of American broadcasting have been eliminated and because education is given special consideration by the British Broadcasting authorities.

Immediately, however, this proposal finds many opponents—and for two extremely simple reasons. First, the essential feature of the British system is that it is wholly owned and operated by the Government, and, second, because the mass of Americans look to radio for entertainment and news and not for education in the formal, school room sense.

The suggestion of a topic for debate, either in the classroom or in the halls of Congress, which contains the two elements of Government ownership and the control of the entertainment of the American public, is guaranteed to produce fireworks.

Government ownership of radio came naturally to England as it did to many of the Continental countries, which for years had either owned and operated their systems of communication—postal, telegraph, cable and telephone—or had maintained strict control over them.

But in America the reverse is true. Except for the postal service, all forms of communication have always been privately owned by companies and corporations, regulated by the Government under the interstate commerce provisions of the Constitution of the United States, and subject to peremptory taking over in toto by the Government in time of national emergency.

When radio broadcasting became the rage in England the British Postmaster General simply set up a broadcasting system on behalf of the Government. But when broadcasting broke loose in America every American boy—adult as well as juvenile—bought a receiving set if he could afford it or made one if he couldn't, and demanded action from the broadcasters. They were not interested in hearing from the Government. They wanted entertainment. The owners of the broadcasting stations gave them music and drama. That cost the broadcasters money. Somebody conceived the idea of using the radio for advertising. The broadcasters bought the entertainment. The advertiser paid the broadcaster for the time used over the latter's station to advertise the former's product. And the "sponsored program" was born.

American and British broadcasting, therefore, began from two diametrically opposite points of view. Unhampered by law, broadcasting in America went through a mushroom growth, resulting in the installation of too many stations and general interference and confusion on the air. Congress stepped in and passed the Radio Act of 1927 creating the Federal Radio Commission, making broadcasting subject to regulation in the public interest but leaving its operation in private hands, with no charge to the listener. The advertiser was left to pay the cost of broadcasting.

In England the British Government built the broadcasting stations, put on the programs and taxed the owner of each receiving set 10 shillings a year to pay for the programs.

All the important characteristics of the operations of the two systems will be found in the ensuing pages, with the basic arguments for and against them.

# Safe-Guarding the Ether—

## The American Way

by Hon. Clarence C. Dill

United States Senator, Washington State

Co-author Radio Act of 1927    ::    ::

In the field of broadcasting reception, the U. S. Government has left radio listeners absolutely free.

Any resident of the country may make his own set or use any kind of a ready-made set. Properly equipped, he can listen not only to radio broadcasting, but to everything else in the ether, from transatlantic telephone conversations to SOS calls and the experiments of amateurs.

Not only that, but the provisions of the radio law set up as the one and only standard for the issuance or refusal of a broadcasting license, the public interest.

During the period from 1921 to 1927 radio broadcasting was handled by the Secretary of Commerce under a kind of gentlemen's agreement between him and those engaged in broadcasting, because the then existing law applied only to wireless telegraphy and was intended to regulate only such use of radio. Radio broadcasting was entirely unused in 1910 and 1912, when radio laws were passed with maritime communication chiefly in mind.

The law of 1927 was entirely new legislation covering radio. There was nothing like it in any other country. Congress acted under the general powers of the Constitution for the public welfare and the public good, but claimed jurisdiction primarily under the commerce clause of the Constitution.

It had only the Interstate Commerce law as a precedent, but could not treat radio as it had treated the railroads in a legislative way for a number of reasons. In the first place, radio is an intangible thing that cannot be seen, felt, or heard as such. There is nothing concrete nor physical about it, except the apparatus used for transmission and reception. The conception called the ether is a theory of scientists. The waves of electrical energy which radio engineers claim pass outward with equal force in every direction from center to circumference, carrying sound or light, are unrecognizable by the physical senses. Certain conditions of the earth and air and man-made interferences hinder and sometimes stop these waves, but radio experts have not yet been able to control or even understand fully these phenomena.

In face of these facts, or rather this lack of understanding, Congress found it necessary to pass legislation or permit radio confusion to grow worse and worse because of the lack of authority in any government official to regulate the use of radio apparatus. Still more important was the fact that unless Congress did act, those who had expended large sums of money for broadcasting equipment and radio service would appeal to the courts for protection of this use of their apparatus. They would secure

injunctions against the use of other radio apparatus in a manner that would interfere with the programs they were sending.

In fact, one station in Chicago did take such steps, and the court very properly declared that as long as Congress failed to provide a system of radio regulation the court would recognize and protect such rights.

Foreign governments generally seem to have recognized these facts. They have been extremely jealous of the use of radio privileges and the acquisition of radio rights. Government ownership of public utilities, generally by the state in many countries, made government ownership of radio facilities quite natural and easy to establish. In addition to this, the purpose of many governments to keep control of the transmission of information and views on public questions made a high degree of government control necessary.

But, in the United States, private initiative and freedom of radio, both as to broadcasting and as to reception, represented the American way of utilizing this great resource. Not only was it desirable that Congress should encourage this spirit of private initiative and maintain the freedom of development and use of radio, but it was also absolutely necessary that the legislation enacted prevent any person, firm, or corporation from acquiring any vested rights in the use of radio apparatus. This was necessary if this great national resource was to be retained for the people's benefit.

The radio law of 1927 went as far as legal language can go to make it impossible for anybody ever to acquire vested rights in the use of any part of the radio spectrum. The opening section declares the purpose of the Act to be to regulate radio transmissions and communications, and "to maintain the control of the United States" over all radio channels and "to provide for the use of such channels, but not the ownership thereof" under licenses. Then are added these significant words: "And no such license shall be construed to create any right, beyond the terms, conditions, and periods of the license."

In subdivision H of Section 5 is found this language: "No station license shall be granted by the Commission until the applicant therefor shall have signed a waiver of any claim to the use of any particular frequency or wave length or of the ether as against the regulatory power of the United States because of the previous use of the same, whether by license or otherwise."

In subdivision A of Section 11 is a third provision which reads as follows: "The station license shall not vest in the licensee any right to operate the station nor any right in the use of the frequencies or wave length designated in the license beyond the term thereof nor in any other manner than authorized therein."

These quotations, together with the first paragraph of Section 9 of the Radio law of 1927 (which reads as follows: "The licensing authority, if public convenience, interest or necessity will be served thereby, subject to the

*Continued on page 196*



# Safe-Guarding the Ether—

## The British Way

### From the 1933 Year Book of The British Broadcasting Corporation

ON May 4th, 1922, the Postmaster-General, Mr. F. G. Kellaway, announced in the House of Commons that it had been decided to authorise regular broadcasting in Great Britain.

Long and delicate negotiations were still, however, to take place, and it was not until October 18th that the form of Company was officially agreed by the radio manufacturers and the Post Office. The British Broadcasting Company was registered on December 15th, 1922, but its license to broadcast was not issued till January 18th, 1923. It was retrospective, however, and gave permission to broadcast as from November 1st, 1922. Broadcasting had actually begun officially in London on November 14th from the station 2LO, loaned by the Marconi Company and operated under their auspices until the end of the year. On the following day, the Company took over the existing stations at Birmingham and Manchester under similar arrangements with the Western Electric Company and the Metropolitan Vickers Company. In the last week of December, with the appointment of a General Manager and other officials, the B.B.C. organisation began to take effect, and the company began its public service career which the Corporation has continued since January 1st, 1927.

The essential constituents of a broadcasting system are *programmes, transmission* and, thirdly, *constitution and management*, the last-named being understood to cover on the one hand external policy, viz. relations with the public, the professions and industries concerned or affected, the Government, and other broadcasters; and, on the other internal policy, viz. co-ordination of effort, allocation of resources, and planning of development. The term "management" covers, of course, the control exercised by the Board of Directors or Governors as well as that exercised by the executive officials. Before one settles the constitution of any service or business one must have at least a general idea of the purpose that it is meant to fulfil. But in 1921-1922 even a general idea was difficult to formulate. The situation was that broadcasting, hitherto practised for the love of the thing by a few scientific amateurs, had leaped into considerable popularity in the United States, and was spreading to Europe under the impulsion of some urge that might be either a whim of the moment or the sign of a real social necessity. In America the pace of the movement had been too hot for careful thought and planning. Although the first important and sensational broadcast had been one of political news, and educational broadcasting of a sort was done here and there as early as 1921, the field was at once captured by the combined forces of handy-fingered Youth and recrea-

tion-seeking Labour, for whose demands the radio trade set itself to cater on purely commercial lines. This was not in the least surprising. Most, even among thoughtful men, were satisfied to think of "radio" as a solution of the great problem of how to occupy the leisure of a population that worked for short and intense hours on uninspiring series production. Moreover, communications not being, in America, a public service, the national authority was not obliged, as in Europe, to take a standpoint in the matter. In Great Britain, on the contrary, the Post Office was in a position to regulate broadcasting from the first, and indeed under the constitutional necessity of doing so. Even thus, the line of least resistance might well have been to allow commercial broadcasting for entertainment alone with some form of competition, but it chose otherwise and, looking at the future as well as the present, it adopted unequivocally the principle of putting broadcasting in the hands of a single and undivided organisation with public service as a motive.

This decision was of fundamental importance not only for British broadcasting, but for European practice in general. It marked the intention to make broadcasting, as a public service, subserve a public need. What precisely that need was would presumably emerge from experience. Meantime the management would be in the hands of a board with a chairman appointed by the Government and the other directors by the wireless manufacturers. Its non-commercial character would be ensured by the limitation of profits to a fixed dividend, by the prohibition of advertisement, and by the fact that the principal source of revenue would be a share of the license fees to be collected by the post office from listeners. This last was a new device, but how appropriate it was to the special conditions of broadcasting is shown by the fact that it has been imitated in almost all European countries, in the British Dominions, and in Japan.

A further source of income for the company was to be the levy of royalties on sets and components sold to the public. To that end it was made one of the conditions of the listener's license that his set should bear a standard "B. B. C." mark. This system, which had as its objects the patriotic one of excluding foreign sets and components and the purely commercial one of discouraging the home constructor for the benefit of the manufacturers of complete sets, was a failure. The Postmaster-General had indeed already authorized the issue of an "experimenter's" license for the genuine experimenter, but the latter was soon indistinguishable from the ordinary home constructor. A confused situation thereupon arose, a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry ("the Sykes Committee") was assembled, and before the company was a year old it had itself decided to abolish the royalties as from July 1st, 1924. The company's share in the ordinary license revenue was correspondingly increased and its partial dependence on the wireless trade diminished.

The company's own policy of public service had in fact

*Continued on page 196*

## —The American Way

*Continued from page 194*

limitations of this Act, shall grant to any applicant therefor a station license provided for by this Act") have been termed the American people's "Magna Charta of the air."

Owing to the fact that there is a limited number of frequencies or wave lengths available for use, Congress must prevent private ownership in rights to use radio apparatus in order to insure freedom of development in the art. Every year, almost every month, somebody discovers or invents a new use for radio waves. With regulation unhampered by private rights, the federal licensing authority can act in the public interest in accordance with new conditions.

Congress would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to legislate on all the situations and conditions that develop from time to time. For this reason, the radio law granted the Federal Radio Commission, which it established, extremely broad powers. The law gives it special authority to deal with chain programs and forbids the granting of licenses to those found guilty of violating certain statutes against monopoly and unfair trade practices.

As stated in the beginning of this article, all of the legislative problems of preventing private ownership of radio, and most of those relating to monopolistic or one-sided use of the radio, could be avoided by government operation and control of programs by providing for their expense by a government tax. But that is not the American way. Private initiative, private capital, and, most of all, American business methods of popularizing and developing radio, have placed radio in this country far ahead of that of any other country in the world.

A forward-looking spirit on the part of most of those engaged in the industry in this country, and a liberal policy by Congress, have brought radio to its present place. Since Marconi's feat of spanning the Atlantic with radio waves, most of the great radio inventions, and by far the greatest radio developments, have been produced by American inventors and American business men. Radio as we know it today is truly an American art developed and used in the American way. We should keep it so.—*Extracts, see 1, p. 224.*

## —The British Way

*Continued from page 195*

made this inevitable from the first. The Sykes Committee, which was not expected to report in a sense favorable to the company, in fact recommended an extension of the license for two years. It did not confine itself to unravelling the licensing tangle, but was able to review broadcasting as a whole. It recognized the immense social and political possibilities of the medium and the success with which, so far, the company had met its responsibilities and used its opportunities, and it encouraged a considerable extension of the services hitherto provided, both as to the areas covered and as to the programme matter given.

One of its recommendations, carried into effect immediately, was the establishment of relay stations to supplement the eight "main" stations of the original scheme. Another, not destined to be realized for some years, was the removal of restrictions on the news bulletins which the post office, at the instance of the press, had imposed on the company at the outset.

Thereafter the British broadcasting system remained unaltered until the company's license expired on December 31, 1926. But within the old framework development was continuous; so that, when the second, or "Crawford," Committee of Enquiry sat in 1925-6, it was almost a foregone conclusion that it would report in favor of a national broadcasting authority taking over the staff, system, and plant, as a going concern. This was effected on January 1st, 1927, when the "corporation" replaced the "company," the change being scarcely perceptible to the staff or to the public. The shareholders were eliminated by being repaid at par; the assets were transferred to the Postmaster-General and by him to the new body. The trade directors were replaced by governors appointed by the Crown.

The basic principle [of the constitution, as granted by the charter] that broadcasting should be operated on a national scale, for national service, and by a single national authority, has justified itself, and that any modifications, arising out of experience, that might be suggested when the time comes for revision (1936) would be in the direction of further affirming rather than qualifying that principle.—*Extracts, see 2, p. 224.*

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## In Case America Should Adopt a Foreign System

### —An Estimate by the Federal Radio Commission

CONDITIONS in Europe and in the United States are entirely different. In Europe there are a large number of sovereign nations in a relatively small area, with different languages, different customs, and different political interests. The United States is a single nation in which the population is distributed over a large

area. To apply results obtained in any European country to the United States would probably lead one to entirely wrong conclusions.

There are many possible broadcasting systems which could be operated in the United States under Government control but the determination of a proper technical sys-

tem depends on the aim to be accomplished. The United States is made up of 48 political subdivisions having varying areas, populations and interests. The policy adopted might take into account the particular interests of the people of the various States with the selection of programs in the control of each State, or all stations could be nationally owned and operated with the selection of all programs in the control of a national organization.

Each policy requires a different system of technical operation, and it is not possible to formulate a definite plan of technical operation without a determination of policy. For example, it might be decided that each person in the United States, no matter where located, is entitled to receive the same number of programs, each with a satisfactory signal free of interference. Such a service might be accomplished by means of a large number of low-power stations operated in several synchronized chains. It is estimated that such a system would require approximately 1,000 stations for each program. To supply three programs would require an initial cost for installation of approximately \$120,000,000 with an annual technical maintenance of approximately \$100,000,000.

Another possible policy might be to give two or more national programs which could be heard at night throughout the United States and provide one or more stations to be operated independently by each State to give programs of interest to the States. The National coverage could be provided by several high-power stations geo-

graphically arranged so as to give a satisfactory rural service. The State stations would vary in power depending on the area of the State to be served. To give such a service would require an initial investment of approximately \$50,000,000 with an annual technical maintenance of approximately the same amount.

These two plans are simply examples which have been developed to show the possibilities and to give some idea of cost. There are many other plans that could be conceived, each of which would serve a certain purpose and fulfill a particular policy. Without the policy, however, complete studies can not be made and cost figures can not be estimated accurately.

The present system of competitive operation of broadcasting stations by private enterprise has grown up under the policy laid down by Congress in the radio act of 1927. Under this system all the people of the United States get some form of radio-broadcast service. If the policy is to be changed, then a thorough investigation of all the various possible methods of serving the people of the United States should be made and a policy determined which would be satisfactory.

The Federal Radio Commission is ready to prepare detailed plans for a technical arrangement to meet the needs of any policy which may be determined if it should be decided that Government ownership and operation of broadcasting is desirable for the United States.—*Extracts, see 3, p. 224.*

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## How Radio is Operated in Other Countries

**Argentina.** Has 38 stations, all privately owned except three, two of which are dedicated to education. The privately owned stations derive their revenue entirely from commercial advertising, subject to slight regulations. Are self-supporting. Time is not used for educational purposes.

**Australia.** Has 54 stations. The Government controls the high-power stations, supported by license fees for receiver-set ownership. They are prohibited from accepting commercial advertisements. The low-power stations are privately owned and operated, their revenue obtained entirely from advertising. The supervision of radio is under the control of the Postmaster General. There is no special censoring of commercial advertisements. Little has been done on the adaptation of radio to educational purposes.

**Austria.** Has six stations under governmental supervision, but owned and operated by a private organization with an exclusive 30 years' license. Advertising prohibited. Maintenance and operation provided for by a license fee for receiver-set ownership. Programs are both educational and entertaining. Appears to be self-supporting.

**Brazil.** Has 22 stations privately owned and operated, sole revenue derived from commercial advertising. The Government collects a small tax on receiving apparatus to cover expenses for supervision.

**Chile.** Has 24 stations privately owned and operated. Revenue obtained exclusively from advertising. Control casually exercised by the Central Government.

**France.** Variance as to the total number of stations which are divided into two classes: State stations that operate on revenue derived by license fee from receiver-set ownership, and private stations that derive their revenue through commercial advertising or subsidies from private organizations.

State stations allowed to accept indirect advertisements, private stations have no limitations as to kind, nor amount of commercial advertising. Latter are self-supporting. Educational programs broadcast by both state and the principal private stations. One Paris station broadcasts special programs to schools every school day.

**Germany.** (Before Hitler Regime) Has 28 stations, the property of the German Postal Department, operated in conjunction with nine broadcasting organizations under central administrative and financial control. The revenue derived principally from tax of 24 marks (\$5.72) on listeners, collected monthly by the postman. About 2 per cent of revenue obtained through commercial censored advertising. Educational programs are systematically broadcast to schools and also specially arranged programs are transmitted in the evening hours for adults.

*Continued on page 224*



# How the American System is Set Up Today

## Control

Under the American law all forms of communication, except the mails, are operated by private individuals or corporations, subject to Government regulation and to the proviso that the Government, in time of emergency, may take complete control of them. Therefore, when Congress, in 1927, enacted a law specifically designed to control radio broadcasting it followed the general American policy by providing for private operation, with Government regulation and by creating the Federal Radio Commission to act as the regulatory body.

The Federal Radio Commission is a body of five members appointed by the President, each Commissioner being from one of the five radio zones into which the country is by law divided. The members of the commission and the zones they represent are:

*First Zone*—W. D. L. Starbuck, New York, Democrat.

*Second Zone*—Thad H. Brown, Ohio, Republican.

*Third Zone*—E. O. Sykes, Miss., Dem., (Chairman).

*Fourth Zone*—James H. Hanley, Nebraska, Democrat.

*Fifth Zone*—Harold A. Lafount, Utah, Republican.

The law provides that all broadcasting stations must be licensed by the Commission before being allowed to operate. These licenses are for periods of six months, at the end of which they must be renewed. The Commission was granted the power to issue licenses, and in the determination thereof was empowered to: Classify radio broadcasting stations in certain groups; determine the nature of the service of such groups of stations; allot wave lengths of frequencies to certain groups of stations; allot wave lengths or frequencies to individual stations; allot power to individual stations; allot time of operation to individual stations; determine location of groups or classes of stations; and location of individual station; to enact rules and regulations for the guidance of broadcasting stations; to issue licenses to radio broadcasting stations only if the operation of the station would serve public interest, convenience and necessity.

The law provides further that appeal from findings can only be taken to the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. The procedure is set forth in the Act.

The Davis Amendment to the Radio Act provides that radio broadcasting facilities be so distributed among the different states and communities as to give equitable and efficient service to each of the same.

## Ownership and Operation

Broadcasting stations in the United States, except a few for the use of the army and navy, are privately owned by individuals, companies, corporations, states, or municipalities. A broadcasting station must obtain from the Radio Commission a license to broadcast, which includes the assignment of a wave-length and an allotment of time during which it may broadcast. Licenses are issued for periods of six months, at the end of which they must be renewed.

## Income and Expenditures

The cost of construction and maintenance of all broadcasting stations, as well as the cost of programs, is borne by the owners of the stations. The principal income of commercial stations is derived from the sale of "time" to advertisers or "sponsors," as they are called in radio parlance. An advertiser buys a given amount of time—anything from five minutes to an hour. The station provides a program covering that time and, during that program period, the goods or services of the "sponsor" are advertised.

The Federal Radio Commission gives the following figures as to costs and expenditures for radio in the United States, as of June 30, 1931:

Actual investment in stations, equipment, etc., \$48,000,000.  
Expenditures for 1931—

Talent and programs.....	\$20,159,656
Regular employees.....	\$16,884,436
Equipment .....	\$4,725,168
Miscellaneous .....	\$36,220,144

Total .....

Total .....	\$77,995,404
Gross receipts for 1931.....	\$77,758,048

Net loss for 1931..... \$237,356

## Number of Radio Stations

There are 604 radio stations in the United States, about 40 of which are owned by states and municipalities, including state educational institutions.

Of these, 167 are chain or network, and 16 are connected with regional networks, which, taken together, represent 28.5 per cent of all stations. The two major chains are the National Broadcasting Company, comprising 84 stations, and the Columbia Broadcasting System, comprising 95 stations. The combined stations of the N. B. C. and C. B. S. represent 27.8 per cent of the total stations and about 68 per cent of the total facilities of power and hours of operation.

## Number of Receiving Sets

Absolutely accurate figures on this question are not obtainable but estimates by the Department of Commerce are that, as of December 31, 1932, there were between 35,000,000 and 37,000,000 radio receiving sets in the world. Of these, 16,697,253 were in the United States, or approximately 45 per cent of the entire number of sets. This estimate also indicates that 55.7 per cent of American families owned receiving sets in 1932.

## Cost to Listeners

Under the American system of radio the only cost to the listener is the price he pays for the purchase, installation and maintenance of his radio set.

## Area and Population

The area of the United States is 3,026,791 square miles; the population, 122,000,000.



# How the British System is Set Up Today

## Control

Under the British law, all forms of communication are under direct control of the Government and in most instances are either owned outright or partially owned by the Government, and all are under the supervision of the Postmaster General. Therefore, when in 1922, broadcasting (as a new form of communication) began to develop in Great Britain, new laws to cover it were not required. Under existing law the Postmaster General had authority to act. On May 4, 1922, the Postmaster General, F. G. Kellaway, formally announced in the House of Commons that the Government had decided to authorize broadcasting in Great Britain.

## Ownership and Operation

The British Government owns all stations and equipment involved in broadcasting in Great Britain. The management and operation is completely in the hands of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

In 1922 the British Broadcasting Company was set up by the Postmaster General. This Company was controlled by a board of directors, part of whom were appointed by the Government and part named by the manufacturers of radio receiving sets and other equipment, to function as a non-profit, public service body. The Company was licensed to operate until December 31, 1926. Since the Company did not function wholly to the satisfaction of the Government and the public, its license was not renewed.

In its place the present British Broadcasting Corporation was set up and began functioning on January 1, 1927.

The entire personnel of the British Broadcasting Company (the B. B. C.) is appointed by the Government. Following is the list of present officers:

### Board of Governors:

The Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, *Chairman*.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Gainford, *Vice-Chairman*.

Harold G. Brown, Esq., M. J. Rendall, Esq., C. M. G., LL.D., the Viscountess Snowden.

*Director-General:* Sir John C. W. Reith.

## Income and Expenditures

The entire cost of broadcasting in Great Britain is borne by the British Broadcasting Corporation. Its sources of income are (1) from license fees collected from all owners of receiving sets and (2) from periodicals and books which it publishes. Commercial advertising is not permitted but the B. B. C. advertises its own publications over the radio.

The financial statement published in the B. B. C. Year-Book, 1933, gives the following figures for the calendar year 1931:

## Expenditure

Expenditure on Programmes (including payment of Artists, Orchestras, News Royalties, Performing Rights and Simultaneous Broadcast Telephone System, Salaries and Expenses of Programme Staff).....	£657,935
Maintenance of Plant, Power, Salaries and Expenses of Engineering Staff, Development and Research, etc.....	£211,735
Rent, Rates, Taxes, Insurance, Heating and Lighting, Upkeep and Expenditure upon Premises, Telephones, etc.....	£100,569
Administration Salaries and Expenses.....	£64,014
Contributions to Staff Provident Fund for nine months and to Staff Pension Scheme for three months .....	£13,824
Governors' Fees .....	£5,947
Provision for Depreciation and Renewal of Premises, Plant, Furniture and Fittings, etc.	£67,760
Provision for Income Tax.....	£73,995
Balance carried down, being Net Revenue for year .....	£229,567
	<hr/> £1,425,349

## Income

By Licence Income (Net).....	£1,179,031
By Net Revenue from Publications, after providing for Bad and Doubtful Debts.....	£237,834
By Interest Receivable and Sundry Receipts, less Loan Interest payable.....	£8,483
(@ \$4.50 to the £, \$6,514,070.50).....	<hr/> £1,425,349

## Number of Stations

There are 21 broadcasting stations in the United Kingdom, all operated by the B. B. C.

## Number of Receiving Sets

The total number of licensed listeners in force on January 31, 1932, was 4,473,227, which includes 2,997 free licenses for the blind.

## Cost to the Listeners

Under the British system of radio the cost to the listener is the price he pays for the purchase, installation and maintenance of his receiving set, plus an annual license fee of 10 shillings (about \$2.40) which he pays to the Government.

## Area and Population

The area of the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, Wales, North Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands, is 94,284 square miles; the population is 44,000,000.

# Congress and the Question of Radio Control

SINCE the authority to make any vital changes in the existing American system of radio control rests solely with Congress, those educators who are pressing for changes are looking to the next session of Congress in the hope that action may be had.

The principal point made by those who express dissatisfaction with the present conduct of radio is that commercialism rules and that education has to take what it can get. They want radio operated as a public service, with education placed first.

Some go so far as to say that the Federal Government should own and operate all broadcasting stations, as does the British Government. Others simply want educational institutions given first choice of wave lengths and time.

All of them agree, however, that Congress should make a special study of the conduct of radio in the United States and in the principal foreign countries, the information thus gathered to form the basis of new legislation. Therefore, so far as the next session of Congress is concerned, the efforts of those desiring a change will be concentrated on bringing about a sweeping investigation of radio by a special committee or by one of the standing committees of Congress. Last year the Federal Radio Commission made a comprehensive report on radio in response to a Senate resolution.

Under the Twenty-first Amendment to the Constitution, better known as the Norris Amendment, or the "Lame Duck" Amendment, changing the date of the beginning of the sessions of Congress, the first regular session of this, the Seventy-fourth Congress, meets on January 3. The Seventy-fourth Congress met for the first time on March 9, last, but that was an extra session, called by President Roosevelt to consider emergency legislation. Without that session the Seventy-fourth Congress would not have convened until January 3, 1934.

The problem confronting those desiring changes in the radio system is whether they can get action in what promises to be an extremely crowded session. So far as the Roosevelt Administration is concerned, the national emergency is not over, and President Roosevelt is preparing a definite program for the next session of Congress to take care of defects in some of the legislation hastily passed at the extra session and for the enactment of new legislation.

When this program is presented to Congress by the President, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House will take care that nothing interferes with it.

If the President were to advocate a change in the present radio system, he would recommend it to Congress and Congress would enact his recommendations into law. But the information from authoritative sources is that the President and his close advisers have not so far included radio in the list of those subjects on which they consider prompt action imperative.

Therefore, any move for radio reform must come from a member or members of the Senate or House. And when that move is made, there still remains the problem of whether it has a chance to get anywhere during the next session of Congress.

The list of radio measures introduced in the extra session, given below, shows that there are several resolutions providing for an investigation, either by a special committee of Congress or by a special committee composed partly of members of the Senate and House and partly of outsiders to be appointed by the President.

All bills and resolutions for investigation are, so far as the House is concerned, automatically referred to the Committee on Rules. This committee is the official arm of the leaders of the majority of the House and, unless the leaders want it to report a measure, that measure is not reported. This means that if the Democratic leaders in the House want an investigation of radio there will be one. If they do not want one there will be none.

It may be that if there is enough pressure brought to bear a resolution for an investigation will be adopted with the thought that the investigation will in nowise interfere with the legislative program, since it will not be completed before the end of the session, thus leaving action on any report an investigating committee might make until a later session.

The conjecture of those wise in the ways of Congress is that the question has an even chance of consideration some time during the session, but that, in all probability, it will not be reached until toward the end and that, in any event, it will be a committee matter only and will not reach the floor of either house before the session ends.

The bills and resolutions dealing with radio introduced in the present Congress are as follows:

H. Con. Res. 1 (*Introduced on March 9 by Rep. H. P. Fulmer, S. C., D.*). Providing for the appointment of a special commission whose membership shall be two members of the Senate, two members of the House, one person each representing labor, education, religion, the press, the home and the radio industry, to make a study of the existing systems of radio broadcasting in the United States and other countries "to the end that the Congress may have an adequate body of information from which to develop a system of radio broadcasting for the United States which will most effectively promote the interests of listeners and the national interests of the United States."

H. Res. 19 (*Introduced on March 9 by Rep. Louis T. McFadden, Pa., R.*). Providing for the appointment of a special committee of five members of the House to investigate the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting Company to determine whether the management and operations of these two companies is in the public interest or whether it tends to domination and monopoly in the broadcasting field.

H. R. 1558 (*Introduced on March 9 by Rep. Louis Ludlow, Ind., D.*). Amending the Radio Act of 1927 to provide that short wave sets, capable of tuning in on police signals, must be licensed.

Also H. R. 1559, amending the Radio Act to provide for the licensing of all receiving sets used on vehicles.

H. R. 1735 (*Introduced on March 9 by Rep. S. C. Bland, Va., D.*). Designed to correct technical defects in the present radio law. The principal controversial pro-

vision in this bill is that providing that the Radio Commission may grant applications for additional 100-watt stations in any state, regardless of established quotas.

H. R. 3760 (*Introduced on March 17 by Rep. Sam Rayburn, Tex., D.*). Providing for the establishment of a Federal Communications and Power Commission to regulate the transmission or communication in interstate and foreign commerce, of intelligence by wire or wireless or otherwise by the use of electrical energy and the transmission or sale of power, etc. This bill, which places the duties of the Federal Radio Commission and the Federal Power Commission under a new Commission.

H. Res. 181 (*Introduced on June 6 by Rep. Russell Ellsey, Miss., D.*). Providing for an investigation of the Radio Commission by a special committee composed of ten members of the House, two from each radio zone, the investigation to be conducted with special attention to service in each zone; the event to which the chains broadcasting systems have been favored by the Commission; the extent to which the broadcasting stations in the United States are under control of the chains and the extent to which annual licensing fees properly may be assessed for the privilege of operating broadcasting stations.

Radio legislation by Congress dates back to June 24, 1910, when an Act was passed dealing with radio facilities for passenger vessels and to stop interference with the transmission of wireless messages. Since it involved marine communications this bill, when it was introduced in the House, was referred to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Later, when radio development grew to include land broadcasting, bills affecting that phase of radio were also referred to this committee. Upon one occasion the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce claimed jurisdiction over radio legislation on the ground that radio was interstate commerce, but the House, by vote, rejected this claim. Subsequently the name of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries was altered to specifically include radio and the committee is now the Committee on Merchant Marine, Radio and Fisheries.

In 1912, after making the provisions of the Act of 1910 include cargo as well as passenger vessels, Congress passed the first general radio act, known as The Marine Act of 1912. This act was designed to regulate interstate and international messages by radio, but it did not contemplate broadcasting as it is understood today. The duty of administering the Act was delegated to the Secretary of Commerce.

As a war measure, President Wilson issued an executive order on July 31, 1918, placing all radio stations under control of the Government, but leaving a few high-powered commercial stations in the hands of their owners. On February 13, 1920, all commercial stations held by the Government were returned.

With the sudden growth of broadcasting as an amusement and as a vehicle for advertising, complications inevitably arose and lawsuits to test the powers of the Department of Commerce under the Act of 1912 were an unavoidable result.

The decisions of Federal courts in various localities were in conflict. Finally in 1926 a court decision was

handed down to the effect that the powers of the Secretary of Commerce under existing law were "general, vague and ambiguous." This decision was made in the Zenith Radio Corporation case.

Uncertain, because of conflicting decisions, the Secretary of Commerce called on the Attorney General for an opinion on the powers of the Department of Commerce. On July 8, 1926, the Attorney General gave the opinion that the Secretary of Commerce had authority to issue licenses but had no authority to assign power and wave lengths, nor authority to fix the time in which broadcasting stations could operate.

The resulting confusion brought a demand on Congress for more definite legislation for the control of radio.

In his article on page 194 of this issue, Senator Clarence C. Dill, of Washington, who has been active in shaping radio legislation in Congress, gives an illuminating account of the situation at that time and of the manner in which Congress handled the problem with which it was faced.

On February 23, 1927, Congress passed the Radio Act of 1927 which created the Federal Radio Commission. This Act, with subsequent amendments, is the radio law of America today. Its principal provisions will be found on page 198.

The most important amendments passed since 1927 were the Davis Amendment of 1928, providing that all sections of the country should have equal radio facilities; and the amendment of 1929 making the Radio Commission a permanent body.

The President, in 1932, by executive order, transferred the radio division of the Department of Commerce, which had been charged with licensing radio operators and inspecting radio equipment, over to the Radio Commission.

In October, 1932, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a decision which is considered the most important court decision affecting radio yet delivered, since it upholds the doctrine of "freedom of the air" explained by Senator Dill as one of the principal objects sought to be accomplished in the Radio Act of 1927, in that it declares, in effect, that owners of radio stations and equipment have no vested rights in the ether channels over which radio transmissions pass.

Last year, January 12, 1932, the Senate adopted a resolution introduced by Senator James M. Couzens, of Michigan, calling on the Federal Radio Commission to make a survey and to report to the Senate on all phases of commercial operation of broadcasting; with special reference to advertising and the facilities for the use of radio in education. The resolution also directed the Commission to report any available information "on the feasibility of Government ownership and operation of broadcasting facilities."

In response to this resolution the Commission, on June 9, 1932, filed with the Senate a comprehensive report, comprising more than 200 pages, containing a wealth of material on all phases of radio broadcasting. This report was printed as Senate Document 137, 72nd Congress, 1st session.

The Senate has not considered radio legislation since the Radio Commission report was received.



PRO

# Should the U. S. Adopt the British System of Radio Control?

by Joy Elmer Morgan

Chairman, National Committee  
on Education by Radio :: ::

Arguments Favoring

In discussing the question as to who shall control radio broadcasting in the United States we are dealing with a subject which very vitally and closely affects our national destiny. It is much more important that the people be informed than that they be entertained. An occasional Presidential broadcast is not enough. There must be continuing daily discussion of important local, state, and national enterprises so that the people will be familiar with the management of their own household. Whoever controls the distribution of ideas will in the end control the destiny of America. There should be complete freedom of speech and primary emphasis upon the educational aspects of broadcasting. This conservation of the primary purpose of broadcasting can be better served if the people keep broadcasting in their own hands than it can be if that broadcasting is under the control of commercial interests who stand to profit by its persistent and permanent misuse.

It is not accurate to describe radio broadcasting in the United States as a system. It is the exact opposite of a system. It is confusion and chaos. While the purpose of the Radio Act of 1927 is sound, the working out of its provisions has tended toward private monopoly, uncertainty, confusion, litigation, extravagant costs, and the subordination of public interest to the wishes of greedy commercial domination.

The British system of broadcasting is based on sound principles and is in striking contrast to the confusion in America. It has the following three essential features:

First, the broadcasting facilities of the nation are owned and operated by a government-corporation representing and responsible to the public—a corporation similar to the Tennessee Valley authority in the United States.

Second, under the British system, programs are established and managed under the general direction of this independent government corporation in the interest of the general public.

Third, the cost of broadcasting in Britain is financed directly by the people themselves and has been kept entirely free from commercial advertising, although the British Broadcasting Corporation has authority to accept "sponsored" programs and to acknowledge their origin if it wishes to do so.

The United States should select and adopt the essential features, the fundamental principles which underlie the British system.

The present American broadcasting practice does not give the government sufficient control to enable it to exert

any real influence on the quality of programs. Such control as it has is slow-acting and negative. It is impossible to make adjustments in the use of channels without long, complicated, and costly legal processes.

Having secured from the Federal Radio Commission a monopoly of radio channels, the great commercial interests have been using these channels to further trench their position.

That the radio trust will not allow speakers to whom it has given free time on the air to express opinions derogatory to the power interests has been demonstrated time and again.

There is a fundamental distinction between advertising over the radio and advertising through other mediums. When one is reading a magazine, for example, he may pass by the advertising and give his attention to the printed matter. Not so with advertising coming over the radio. The listener is helpless. He has no choice except to pull the switch or to turn to another program.

From the very beginning the public has objected to this feature of radio broadcasting. The public does not wish its homes turned into salesrooms. It does not wish to have the immature minds of its children exposed to the tricks of the salesmen. It does not wish to have beautiful music and drama interrupted by advertising ballyhoo.

Advertising by radio has been peculiarly corrupt and irresponsible. Advertising in a periodical leaves a printed record which if it is too obviously dishonest can be taken into a court for correction. Advertising by radio leaves no record. The cases of advertising by radio which have been taken into court have been particularly difficult and unsuccessful.

There is another tendency beginning to appear in American radio practice which contains great danger to the republic. That is the tendency for newspapers to control radio stations or for these powerful radio monopolies to make alliances with newspapers. This gives a virtual monopoly over the machinery for the distribution of ideas which is contrary to the spirit of America and extremely dangerous from the point of view of public welfare. The newspaper by its very nature is competitive. Anyone who can buy a press can establish and publish his paper. Radio is inherently monopolistic. To have the newspapers operated under private enterprise and radio operated under public enterprise gives a wholesome system of checks and balances. If abuses develop

*Continued on page 204*



# Should the U. S. Adopt the British System of Radio Control?

CON

## Arguments Opposing

by Hon. Harold A. LaFount

Member, Federal Radio  
Commission :: ::

I SHOULD like to say a word about the stations in the United States which are owned and operated by educational institutions. I was greatly interested in a statement made by Mr. Levering Tyson, Director of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, that throughout the whole of Europe not a single college or university owns or operates a broadcasting station and that this fact was verified by the Geneva Union. I stated in an address before the Second Annual Institute for Education by Radio, at Columbus, Ohio, in 1931, that in May, 1927, there were 94 educational institutions licensed for the operation of radio broadcasting stations. In the period from February 23, 1927, when the Commission came into existence, to January 1, 1932, the Commission granted licenses to 95 educational institutions, 51 of which have been classed in the Office of Education Bulletins as "public" and 44 as "private." Of these 95 stations, 44 were in operation as of January 1, 1932, 24 being "public" and 20 being "private." Of these existing stations 1 is licensed for the use of 50 watts power, 7 for the use of 100 watts power, 2 for the use of 250 watts power, 3 for the use of 250 watt night and 500 watts local sunset, 11 for the use of 500 watt, 3 for the use of 750 watts night and 1 kilowatt local sunset, 2 for the use of 750 watts, 8 for the use of 1 kilowatt power, 1 for the use of 1 kilowatt night and 2 kilowatts power local sunset, 1 for the use of 3½ kilowatts night and 5 kilowatts power experimental, 3 for the use of 5 kilowatts power, 1 for the use of 10 kilowatts power, and 1 for the use of 20 kilowatts power.

Of the 51 educational stations no longer in operation, 24 voluntarily assigned their facilities to commercial stations, 18 voluntarily abandoned their stations, 7 defaulted on the hearing of their applications, 1 filed a renewal of license and then withdrew it after it was set for hearing, and 1 was denied by the Commission after a full hearing on the application for renewal of license. Thus the records of the Commission show that but one station of the 95 originally licensed was denied renewal by the Commission, and that after a full public hearing on the merits of the station.

During the period from February 23, 1927, to January 1, 1932, the Commission considered 81 applications from educational institutions for additional and more effective radio facilities. Of these 32 were granted in full; 27 were granted in part; 10 were denied after having been designated for public hearing; 10 were dismissed at the request of the applicant after having been designated for hearing, and 2 were retired to the files for lack of prosecution after having been designated for public hearing.

When it is remembered how crowded the broadcast spectrum is and has been (there were 732 stations in operation February 23, 1927), and the mandate of the Davis Amendment to the Radio Act of 1927 for equality of broadcast facilities to the zones of the United States and states within the zones, the foregoing may be considered an excellent showing for educational stations. Of the stations whose applications for additional facilities were denied by the Commission, only one availed itself of the right of appeal to the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, in which case the Commission's decision was affirmed.

When we come to an analysis of the "educational" programs broadcast by the stations of the United States, excluding for the moment, those emanating from strictly educational institutions, we must first agree upon what we mean by "educational." The Commissioner of Education in a letter recently defined "education" in part as follows:

"Human education is a process of individual growth and development beginning with birth and ending only with death, requiring at the outset much effort on the part of others in discovering, nourishing, and directing inherent potentialities, but at every stage demanding increasing self-reliance and self-control. \* \* \*"

The Director of the Bureau of Educational Research at the Ohio State University defines educational broadcasting thus:

"An educational program is one whose purpose is to raise standards of taste, to increase range of valuable information, or to stimulate audiences to undertake worth while activities."

Webster's International Dictionary states that "education" is the "process of developing mentally or morally;" "to cultivate, develop or expand the mind;" "the impartation or acquisition of knowledge, skill or discipline of character." Since more of us have an opportunity of listening to the same national chain programs than we do to programs originating locally, I am sure we will all agree that such programs as the NBC Music Appreciation Hour with Walter Damrosch; the Columbia Broadcasting Company's "American School of the Air," and "Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra" fall clearly within the concept of education as enunciated by the foregoing authorities. There are, of course, single examples of what constitute the 12½ per cent of total time which the records of the Commission indicate a large majority of the stations in the United States devote to educational broadcasting. Of

Continued on page 205

Morgan *Cont'd*

within either system, the other is in a position to carry the facts to the public. If both radio and newspaper are allowed to combine under a single monopoly, they are in a position to control public policy by controlling the information or misinformation which is spread among the people.

Commercial radio programs in the United States, in spite of occasional bright spots have grown worse, and worse, more and more willing to violate standards of common decency, honesty, and good taste. Radio is the voice of the future. Whoever controls that voice will dominate the cultural destiny of America.

The need for the development of cultural and educational programs under non-commercial direction has been recognized in the proposal of the National Advisory Council to establish a national radio institute which will be supported "by general contributions for the direct purpose of devising and producing radio programs of the type that the public wants to hear." If such an organization is necessary in order to get good programs, why should commercial interests be allowed to receive the profits from broadcasting while the listeners pay directly for most of the worthwhile programs they receive? While there is no doubt as to the need of developing cultural programs under non-commercial direction, should the responsibility be placed in a self-appointed committee? Since the United States still retains its faith in democratic government and democratic institutions, would it not be a better plan to entrust the control of radio to the duly selected representatives of the people?

The three fundamental principles of a sound nationwide system of broadcasting are: First, that it shall be organized under a single government authority; second, that the programs shall be planned under the general direction of this authority; third, that the service shall be financed directly by the people themselves.

The British principle of putting broadcasting in the hands of a single and undivided organization with public service as a motive, recognize that the radio channels belong to the people and should never be alienated into private hands.

The Dominion of Canada after giving thorough trial to the American plan, after a world-wide study by a distinguished special committee, and after further inquiry by a parliamentary committee gave up its commercialized radio and is now going over to the essential features of the British plan. It was brought out again and again at the hearing held by the Parliamentary Committee at Ottawa that under a system of government monopoly managed in the public interest, the technical services of radio engineering and station management have a better opportunity than when radio is conducted as a business enterprise. Under private operation engineers and station managers are the hired men of profitmakers. Under public ownership, they are a professional staff performing a highly important public service.

The control of radio in Great Britain is in the hands of experts, scholars, and scientists, free alike from commercial and political domination. The control of radio

in America may be achieved by any private interests which can secure channels from the Federal Radio Commission.

The machinery necessary to make broadcasting really effective must reach into every phase of the cultural life. Is it sound public policy to allow this machinery to be set up by and organized in the interest of private commercial interests? This machinery can best be organized and coordinated, not under commercial or private auspices, but by unified authority representing the people themselves.

Without doubt the success of the English broadcasts is largely due to the fact that British broadcasting is not a tool of high pressure advertisers but is maintained as a cultural and educational agency. Its school broadcasts are directed entirely by responsible educators and are not in any way connected with propaganda. Their programs of adult education occupy the most desirable hours—those hours which in our own country are largely devoted to sales talks. The English programs enjoy an immense following among individuals and discussion groups under local leaders. Listeners are provided also with a substantial amount of entertainment of high quality which has no advertising connected with it.

Realizing the deficiencies of radio alone as an educational or cultural medium, the B. B. C. issues a vast amount of supplementary literature.

The income from the sale of publications is more than half a million dollars yearly. In the field of adult education, the formation of study groups is systematically encouraged, and summer schools are arranged for group leaders and radio lecturers. As a sample of popular interest it may be noted that a single talk in 1931 by Professor MacMurry on psychology brought 17,000 requests for the supplementary aid-to-study pamphlet, and one by Professor Burt on the study of the mind brought 26,000. Apparently the British like being treated as grown-ups!

Those who seek to misinform the American people about broadcasting in Great Britain would have you believe that the B. B. C. interferes with freedom of speech. It is true that the British have a somewhat different point of view about the utterances of their public men, but it is not true that the discussion of public questions in Great Britain has been kept off the radio.

Contrast this with the practice of the great national chains during the Presidential elections who put the campaign broadcasting on a petty commercial basis which simply means that the minority parties do not have a fair chance to reach the public, that those parties which are most deeply entrenched and allied with powerful commercial interests have the best chance on the air. Note also the significant fact that after the election each of the major political parties found itself in debt to each of the great broadcasting corporations. Is it not reasonable to expect that these huge unpaid obligations would have some influence on the party managers and on the government policy in dealing with this important question?

The American commercial broadcaster depends on the

*Continued on page 206*

LaFount *Cont'd*

this 12½ per cent, 80 per cent are sustaining hours to 20 per cent commercial hours.

I may say without fear of successful contradiction that the United States broadcasts more hours of educational programs than any other nation in the world, the total broadcasting hours of each considered.

After a careful study of broadcasting systems in use in many of the foremost countries of the world, the Commission is of the opinion that the American system has produced the best form of radio entertainment to be found anywhere. Under our system, broadcasting is carried on by private enterprise and advertising furnishes its economic support without which it would not exist. The principal objection to our system seems to be the kind and amount of advertising in which stations have indulged.

There are those who urge that advertising which is objectionable in character or amount should be restricted by certain formulae such as forbidding more than a certain proportion of the time to be used for advertising, or forbidding more than a certain number of words to be used in advertising announcements, or forbidding the mention of more than the name of the advertiser or his product, or a short slogan. Some people would have this done by a law enacted by Congress, others would have the Federal Radio Commission do it by regulation. Then there is another kind of regulation proposed, consciously or unconsciously, by persons who would somehow force broadcasting stations to use a certain percentage of the day's schedule for a specific kind of program; educational, for example, or require that certain hours be used for this purpose. I suppose they mean that this should be done either by law or by regulation. The present method which the Commission is using to encourage improvement, is by its action on applications for renewal of license. Whether the Commission's method is the best is not for me to say. I do feel, however, that in the present state of our knowledge, and in the obvious need for further experience and experimentation, it would be dangerous to tie ourselves down to rigid formulae which may be difficult to change.

The Commission believes that the amount and kind of advertising can and should be confined within the limits consistent with the largest possible range of service to the public and these factors should be considered by it, among others, in determining whether the licensing of or continued operation of a station will serve public interest, convenience and necessity.

In conclusion, I want to say that, speaking for myself, I think our system of broadcasting is typically American and that it suits our democratic temperament as no other system I have yet encountered would. I believe that before we disrupt it to adopt any other, we should gravely compare the benefits and disadvantages of that we now have with those we contemplate, watching carefully the scales of performance to see which way they tip.—*Extracts, see 5, p. 224.*

## by Henry Adams Bellows, Ph. D.

Former Member, F. R. C. Vice-President,  
Columbia Broadcasting System :: ::

As a former member of the Federal Radio Commission, and through an active connection with the National Association of Broadcasters, for which I am speaking as the official representative, I have had a good deal to do with broadcasting stations throughout America, and I am quite sure that not a single one has built up and maintained a dependable listening audience by providing merely entertainment and amusement. The listeners themselves have seen to this; they insist on being interested as well as entertained. Run over the daily operating schedule of any broadcasting station which puts forth even the slightest claim to good standing. A full half of it makes no effort to furnish entertainment or amusement; it is designed solely to arouse and hold public interest. Its features may be well done, or ill; they may show a fine perception of the relationship between public interest and public service, or they may not; in any event, the very fact that they are there is in itself a recognition of the necessity for creating and continuing an interest that is quite independent of entertainment.

Each broadcasting chain, and each station, must maintain a distinct identity, a personality of its own, just as a newspaper or magazine does, or people simply will not listen to it with interest, which means that in time they will not listen to it at all.

Even if the broadcasters could sell every minute, they would never dare do so, for the excellent reason that their listeners would not tolerate it. Nobody who is not actively in the business can have the slightest notion of the pressure of public opinion to which every broadcaster is constantly exposed, or, in general, of how extremely sensitive he is to it. His entire business depends solely on an utterly imponderable good-will; if he loses that, he loses everything. Having no exact gauge of public approval, such as is provided by the sales of a newspaper, to assure him that he is following the right course, the broadcaster inevitably has his ears wide open to catch every rumor, particularly the adverse ones, that may give him some clue as to what the public demands of him. The abusive letter, even while it enrages, terrifies him; one estranged listener who makes his feelings known may well stand for ten thousand who depart in silence.

The most discouraging feature of the broadcasting business is the lack of response to programs of the best type. For several seasons I have been personally responsible for the broadcasting of certain rather notable symphony concerts. Do you think that 1 per cent of the people who value such concerts take the trouble to say so? Time and again, when I have asked people if they have ever written to radio stations commending the really good programs, I have encountered only a puzzled surprise that any such expression of approval should be desired. Frankly, when you get good programs—programs

*Continued on page 267*



Morgan *Cont'd*

sale of advertising for his income, and is handicapped by the fact that listeners seldom, if ever, demand advertising. In order to satisfy advertisers he must attempt to force upon listeners advertising which they do not want. The listener often shuts out the advertising or lets it pass unheeded.

The British government charges a license fee of ten shillings yearly for receivers. The number of receivers in 1931 was nearly 4,000,000. The income from license fees was well over \$7,000,000. The government retained 12½ per cent of this amount (about \$875,000). The national treasury department took approximately 25 per cent (about \$1,750,000). Total revenue for the government was about \$2,625,000. To help the government in the financial depression of 1931 the Corporation voluntarily offered to pay \$1,000,000 into the treasury out of the balance put aside for future development.

The essential features of the British system of broadcasting, namely, ownership and operation by a government corporation, the management of programs under the general direction of this corporation, and the financing of radio on a non-commercial basis give a sound foundation on which to build a system of broadcasting worthy of the great traditions and aspirations of America.

It would make possible readjustments in channels from time to time in accordance with new developments without the costly legal action inherent in the present practice. With the elimination of advertising, the time consumed in sales talks could be used for worthy service to the public. It would eliminate the competitive bidding of advertisers, advertising agencies, radio stations, and chain companies, which has resulted, in certain instances, in the payment of fees for radio appearances far in excess of the actual value to the public of such programs. It would reduce the cost of telephone lines used in broadcasting national events, for under a unified authority but one station in a particular area, rather than two or three, would need to be used. It would reduce to a reasonable number the many stations now located in the metropolitan areas of our large cities and giving an essential duplication of programs. There would be a considerable reduction in costs of management. A substantial saving would result from the elimination of the advertising and sales departments in the more than 5000 existent stations.

The American people already have had experience in the cooperative ownership and management of their own enterprises. They have found over a period of years that it is much more economical and better public policy to maintain their own schools than to trust so vital a function to private initiative. The post office, a national monopoly, they have wisely established and continued as a publicly-owned and operated activity. The radio—like the schools, educational, informational, and a vital part of our society, and like the post office, a natural monopoly—can be efficiently, economically, and satisfactorily operated by a government authority.—*Extracts, see 4, p. 224.*

## by Sir John C. W. Reith

Director General, British  
Broadcasting Corp. ::

AMERICA has, not by positive decision after due deliberation, but spontaneously or by default of deliberation—whichever way one prefers to put it—built up her broadcasting practice on lines directly contrary to the British. Reviewing the problem now (and Americans recognize that there is a problem; in other words, they are not quite happy about their broadcasting), they mostly seem to say, quickly and impulsively, "Whatever happens we can't have monopoly and can't have Government control." In such terms many of them imagine that they dismiss the British system from any possible application to America. But there are two main misconceptions. One of these is obvious to those who understand the British system, which is certainly not under Government control. The other is not so obvious; it is, in fact, a matter for discussion—namely, whether a monopoly, to use the invidious term, must necessarily be accompanied by the positive and negative disadvantages so often associated with it.

One sets out, therefore, to persuade the skeptical American that Government or public ownership in some form or another need not embrace Government or public management, or Government or public interference in management—quite the contrary in fact, for these must be obviated. But he has great difficulty in accepting such a possibility. Even if he can comprehend and accept the idea as an intention, he is almost sure to reject the possibility of its being carried out. "For," says he, "what will be the plan of management? Who will the men be? Who will appoint them? How will they keep clear of political pressure and political interference? Won't they always have one eye on those who can stop their reappointment, and who in turn have their eyes on the constituents who elect them?" Well, we hear a great deal about "politics" in America—politics in the sinister sense of the term, in municipal, State and Federal affairs, in the management of public services and in national and international matters. We also hear a good deal about gunmen, racketeers and gangsters in Chicago, for instance. The visitor to the States finds Chicago as peaceful and orderly (and, incidentally, as goodly) a city as any. Exaggerated reports, he thinks. But he questions responsible and representative men—and they are very frank—and he comes to the conclusion that reports are not so exaggerated after all, although some of the conclusions that he may have drawn are false. So also in the case of "politics" he declines on second thought to believe all that he has heard; but here again his American friends are outspoken and categorical. To put the matter in the simplest way, and in terms of the broadcasting problem, they are unable to visualize a board of directors or governors, such as exists for broadcasting in this country and certain others, doing what they were charged to do, impartially, con-

*Continued on page 208*



Bellows *Cont'd*

that appeal to the tastes of cultural and intellectual men and women—you get them because the broadcasters, abused as they are, still have faith in the unknown god, and persist in that faith notwithstanding your apathetic refusal to help them with a single word of intelligent encouragement.

Despite the general unwillingness of most of you to help, however, there does not seem to be much ground for the fear that commercial programs will absorb all of the available time, or even so much of it as seriously to limit the facilities of non-commercial service. As yet, the situation is all the other way; most stations have more unsold time on their hands than they know what to do with. They offer to turn it over, without charge, to educational institutions, in the generally vain hope that they will make sensible use of it, or even any use at all; as a rule the offer is declined. I have no hesitation in saying that the state universities could have, without cost to them, five times as many hours on commercial broadcasting stations as they are now using, and win the undying gratitude of the broadcasters to boot, if only they were equipped to put on reasonably interesting programs. As for the public schools, most broadcasting stations periodically beg the school authorities to make use of their facilities—in vain. Even our regional governing bodies, garrulous as they normally are, turn suddenly shy when it comes to making use of free radio time; the task of utilizing as much as fifteen minutes a week taxes their facilities to the utmost.

No, all this talk about there being no radio time available for public service, including education, free of all advertising control, is nonsense—sheer and arrant nonsense as regards the past and the present, and apparently nonsense as regards the future, too. And even if all the worst fears of the anti-commercialists should be realized—if a time should come when advertisers are using every available minute—there would still be the protection of the federal law. Let the Federal Radio Commission, if ever such action becomes necessary, but certainly not before, define public interest as requiring a certain percentage of non-advertising time, and the gate, thus forced open, can never be shut again. In the long run, broadcasting in America is completely controlled by the people, through their government, just as surely, though not as directly, as it is in Great Britain. Perhaps it is harder here than it is abroad for a small minority to dictate what the public shall hear, but the power of the American public over broadcasting is unquestioned and absolute.

The worst criticism which can justly be brought against the American service is that it is, as a rule, poorly co-ordinated, developed more or less by chance and without any clearly conceived plan. For this the responsibility, I think, rests chiefly elsewhere than with the broadcasters. They are doing the best they can, and spending, in the aggregate, hundreds of thousands of dollars on their non-commercial programs, with remarkably little help or intelligent guidance from the outside. They are spending these large sums for the sole purpose of building up and maintaining public interest in their programs, and they ask nothing better than intelligent help in order to insure

that the money shall be spent wisely.

I have no hesitation in saying that they seldom receive such help, and that they never get it in such a way as to produce a co-ordinated and well-balanced service. The state and municipal authorities, the universities and colleges, the public schools, the musical associations, the women's organizations, the churches and church federations, the economic, social, and political groups which may evince a spasmodic interest in broadcasting for any purpose beyond direct publicity to themselves, rarely manifest the slightest willingness to work together in evolving a coherent plan of public service; it is hard to induce even a single group, though it may have everything to gain by doing so, to put forth thought and effort to carry through a constructive program of its own.

This is a serious charge, but I prefer it as the result of a fairly wide acquaintance with broadcasters and their problems. What they want and need more than anything else—more than business, or power, or even wave-lengths—is intelligent, properly co-ordinated help from the very people who now confine their efforts to fault-finding and ridicule. College professors bewail the low intellectual level of radio programs; how many colleges in America today are ready with a systematic plan for the intelligent use of broadcasting in public education, and with the personnel to put such a plan into execution? Men and women of letters turn their noses even higher at the sight of a loud-speaker; how many of them have seriously given thought to the creation of a new form of literature for this amazing new medium of communication? The medical profession complains, and justly, of the exploitation of the radio audience by quacks; what has the American Medical Association done toward the establishment of a nation-wide radio service in the interests of public health?

This brings us squarely face to face with the problem of the use of broadcasting in education. Now, I may as well confess that I do not know what "education" is. I have been a teacher, if an assistant professorship at a state university is trustworthy evidence on this point, and have achieved such a brevet of scholarship as is given by the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; but when the Federal Radio Commission sternly asks me what educational programs I am broadcasting, I am unable to reply. To me there is more of education in hearing John Masfield read one of his poems than in listening to a lecture—just such a lecture as I used to give myself—by a professorial gentleman with a weary voice on the nature of poetry. I can learn more about music from Signor Toscanini's conducting than I can from a talk on the origin of the diatonic scale. If these things are not part of "education," then I am a long way wide of the mark.

Now, at the grave risk of offending many, I am going to say bluntly that most of the men and women who have tried to use radio for the purposes of formal education have been lamentably deficient in individuality. In other words, their radio talks have been simply and without qualification dull. What they have had to say may have

*Continued on page 209*

Reith *Cont'd*

sistently and regardless of any consideration other than the good of the service. There is a distrust of the "politician," a dislike of him; but he is feared, and above all he is accepted. "Inevitable? For all time, and in all his manifestations?" So it would seem, but one Briton—from previous residence in the country and many contacts with its citizens—may perhaps be permitted to have more faith in the future.

Such being the attitude in America towards anything in the nature of Government ownership—an attitude which remains substantially the same even after misunderstandings have been eliminated—central control appears to many to be excluded too. That, however, does not quite go without saying, since practically monopolistic services do already exist in the United States; this point also, therefore, must be examined by itself. Many arguments may be advanced in opposition to monopoly and in support of competition in general. But it is inevitable that a centralized system should carry all or any of these disadvantages? And, with respect to the benefits of competition, is it inconceivable that somehow or other these benefits should be incorporated in a centralized system? On the other hand, does not competition carry obvious and profound disadvantages in some spheres of activity, and is not radio broadcasting quite definitely one of these? Some arguments apply with more cogency than others, or have greater application to one country than to another. In any case, they range over the whole field of policy control, of administrative efficiency, of financial economy, of moral responsibility. There is nothing new in such arguments—except perhaps with respect to the last consideration. What really matters is the fact that the subject about which the arguments are bandied to and fro is not merely Jew, but is already a profoundly important element in our civilization, not to be handled in any spirit of levity or indifference or bias. And that is the great question. In the United States competition is practically unlimited and practically unbridled.

Until the passing of the Radio Act of 1927 there was literally no control over radio broadcasting in the United States. The department concerned could not refuse a transmitting license, nor even assign a wave-length. In that year the Federal Radio Commission was established. The Commission consists of five persons appointed by the President, but the appointments have to be confirmed by the Senate, for a period of six years. Their function is the licensing and technical regulation of radio transmitting stations of all kinds. It is in connection with this, however, that their activities are most controversial and most necessary. They are empowered to take a station "off the air," if they do not consider it to be in the public interest that it should remain, but, on the other hand, they are required by the law to exercise no censorship over broadcast matter. How are these two somewhat conflicting clauses to be interpreted? A great deal depends upon which is regarded as the more important. There is an elaborate system of appeal against the Commission's decisions, cases being re-examined first by their own examiners, then by the Commission again, and thereafter, if the applicants for new licenses or renewals

are still dissatisfied, by the courts. With things as they are, few could envy the Commissioners their job. If they offend a group of individuals in a particular State, they hear about it from the local congressman, or the local senator. If the Commission is criticized for not taking action where action seems to be manifestly required, the reply may be that it is not the fault of the Commissioners at all, but of the circumstances in which they are placed.

There are still over 600 broadcasting stations in America—far too many. The Commission has certainly done a great deal to clear up the chaos of mutual interference between stations. The country is now in trouble on this score with her neighbors to the north and south, but there appears to be little jamming or other technical interference internally. There is a system of allocation of wave-lengths, and where necessary of allocation of times. It is still easy, however, to secure a license for broadcasting purposes, and there is little, if any, control of the quality of the matter offered for public consumption.

There is no clear answer to the question "What do you think of American broadcasting?" To begin with, there are the two great companies, the National and the Columbia, each feeding and partly controlling a network of some eighty stations spread across the continent, although themselves owning three or four only. Then there are the most important individual stations in whose operation a sense of responsibility is obvious. Beyond that, some hundreds of stations, of many of which the less one says the better. There is no licensing system for listeners. We are told that such an idea is inconceivable. Many individual inquiries in America elicited the reply that the individual himself would be delighted to pay an annual receiving-license fee of \$2.50 or even more, but doubts were frequently expressed as to whether other people would. There is, to begin with, a standing popular objection to anything which looks like Federal taxation. Further, with conditions as they are now, the division of license revenue would present extraordinary and perhaps insuperable difficulties. But there is something else. It is with the license fee idea just as it is with "monopoly" and "Government control." Even if we eliminate the misunderstandings that so quickly gather around those terms, even if the American is convinced that he would be better served under public ownership or some form of centralized control and a licensing system, he will still in all probability say that it cannot be done. There is a hopelessness and a defeatism about this attitude, and of all the factors producing it one would chiefly attribute it to the outlook upon "politics" which has been alluded to above.

So today the expenses of the broadcasting programmes have to be met either by the owner of the stations out of his own pocket, and presumably debited against an advertising or propaganda appropriation, or else by "selling time." The sale of time is, in fact, the standard method of financing the programmes. The commercial sponsor, i. e., advertiser, pays for the programmes and for the use of the technical facilities; to be fair, it should be added that some of the broadcasters employ part of

*Continued on page 210*

## Bellows Cont'd

been of value, but they have not known how to say it properly—not, alas, from lack of training or experience, but from a superfluity of inherent dullness. They have lectured, oblivious to the manifest fact that one cannot decently lecture to a family in its own living-room. I will come no nearer to using the hackneyed etymological definition of "education" than to say that too often, instead of seeking to draw out, they have striven to put in, and to put in something that their hearers refused to receive. They have sat before microphones, armed with written speeches, which they have delivered mechanically and to a distressing accompaniment of rustling papers. Above all, they have forgotten that the great opportunity which radio sets before them is that of friendly, informal utterance; its method is that of the conference, not of the classroom.

That the broadcasters have not been enthusiastic about such "educational" programs is not surprising. They have known, as anybody ought to know, that broadcasting of this sort is intolerably dull, and thus not at all in the spirit of "public interest." They have known that for one listener whose attention is held—for after all there are some people grimly bent on getting information at any cost—it repelled a hundred. Nor can our ventures in radio education claim any high rating on the score of intellectual value. Most of them have been purely elementary in character; the people who demand a higher intellectual standard for broadcasting would be the very last to listen patiently to most of what has gone out under the name of education.

As for the stations devoted exclusively to educational purposes, and managed by educational institutions, their records are eloquent of failure. They have not succeeded in building up or holding any large general audiences, because of the lack of variety in their programs. Many of them round out their schedules with phonograph records because no adequate funds are available for entertainment programs, and the faculty balks at being required to talk forever. Most of them admit that they would not know what to do with full time if they had it. The teachers drafted for radio service, knowing that their audiences are small, do their work half-heartedly; the students in the departments of music weary of being called upon to fill hours of radio time without reward. There is, of course, some excellent work being done by the purely "educational" stations, some valuable information being disseminated, some really stimulating instruction being given; but as a whole the level is depressingly low, as the records of the Federal Radio Commission eloquently testify.

And yet it is seriously proposed to set aside by law 15 per cent of the facilities within the broadcast band for "education." If this plan means that 15 per cent of the wave-lengths are to be allocated to educational institutions for the use of radio stations which they will own and operate, all the experience of the past ten years in every country in the world rises up in opposition. Only a wide variety of programs can build up and hold public interest, and only public interest can create an audience. Variety of program service costs money—lots of it. I

do not believe that a greater disaster could possibly befall the cause of education through radio than a legal decree of divorce between education and commercial broadcasting. Today the educational institutions have free access to the vast audiences built up by the commercial stations, with only the proviso that they must not bore too many of the listeners too much. Segregate the teachers in a limbo of special wave-lengths, and we condemn them to remain unheard and disregarded.

In this connection, I want to call special attention to the definition of broadcasting recommended in 1928 by the Council of the International Broadcasting Union. The Washington Radiotelegraph Congress of 1927 had defined broadcasting stations as "those which are used for the diffusion of radio-telephonic emissions intended to be received by the public." The Council of the Union, sitting at Geneva, recommended an amendment to define broadcasting stations as those "used for the diffusion of radio-telephonic emissions which are addressed without exception to all listeners." In the official report of the Council's action, the words "*sans exception*" are emphasized by underlining. We in America may well profit by the lesson conveyed in this definition. Broadcasting is not for a class or group; it is for "all listeners, without exception." Facilities set aside for special purposes should always remain, as they now are, outside the broadcast band; within that band the combined experience of America and Europe is that every station must serve every listener within its range.

The commercial broadcasters have been publicly accused of selfishness in their insistence on the strict application of this definition to American radio. But do not think that you can set aside broadcasting facilities for education without doing the same for religion—probably with a cleared channel for each denomination—for organized labor, for agriculture, for the state governments—yes, and for Republicans and Democrats, for wets and dries. And every single one of these groups would lose immeasurably thereby. As for the public, every receiving set would be turned into an arena for contests of propaganda—until, indeed, it found its way to the rubbish-heap. No, the whole history of broadcasting in every country in the world, whether the service is controlled by the government or operated by private enterprise, demonstrates conclusively that all the available facilities must be used for all the people.

What we urgently need to do is to use them better. Now, I submit that in matters of education it is too much to expect expert knowledge of the broadcasters. What they do know—and know better than the teachers—is that the one invincible foe to public interest in broadcasting is dullness. You cannot teach people who will not listen. The broadcasters may not know how the public ought to be taught, but they do know how it cannot and must not be taught.

Do you remember that scene in one of the Prologues to Goethe's *Faust*—the Prologue in the Theater—where the playwright, the actor, and the manager are discussing the requirements of the drama? The playwright and the

*Continued on page 211*



Reith *Cont'd*

this revenue for mounting "sustaining" programmes during the unsold time. This sponsored system came into force towards the end of 1924, more or less accidentally, when the provision of programmes by the owners of stations for their own purposes was in general found to be no longer profitable. It may be that if the sponsor had not come forward so quickly, a licensing system would be in force today. As it is, the United States is one of the very few countries of any size in the world where no contribution is made by the listener. Sponsored programmes, be it observed, are by no means so terrible as they are sometimes represented to be. If they were, they would defeat their own purpose. But there are many who feel that they are on the road to doing so now, and I find it difficult to credit the argument advanced in one quarter, that the American public would take less interest in the programmes if they were not sponsored. Certainly I myself found evidence of a growing impatience with and even resentment against advertising.

The work of the great "chains" (systems of wire-linked stations) is quite admirable. Their chief officials appreciate their responsibility to the medium and to the public. In the field of serious information and education, and perhaps even of serious music, the Americans would not claim to have made as much progress as has been made in this country; but there is an increasing recognition of the educational possibilities of the medium, and they are prepared to give facilities for educational material. They cannot, however, do so irrespective of other considerations. On the lowest terms they have to keep the service "off the red"—to make it pay for itself. Sponsors naturally desire the best evening hours, and, although they are quite prepared to stand down on special occasions of national importance, it is not easy to visualize in the near future any serious and coördinated educational effort at times when most people are able and ready to receive it.

Whereas at one end of the scale American broadcasting is thoroughly bad, at the other end it is thoroughly good—provided, of course, that one is prepared to accept the sponsored system and submit to the advertising matter which intrudes itself in greater or less degree throughout the evening. The president of the National Broadcasting Company is convinced that before long advertising material will be considerably reduced, and that, in fact, he will be in a position more or less to control the amount and content of it. I hope he is right. But I am satisfied that today he is unable to do all he would like to do, and that under the present system, or lack of system, many of their colleagues, and many others associated in one way or another with broadcasting, have no doubt as full a realization as anyone in any other country of the immense influence and of the immense responsibility of this new force. These gentlemen are as well able as any to discharge it worthily and fully. The fact is that they operate under handicaps—serious handicaps; and until these are removed, or at least mitigated, radio broadcasting will not be in America, and will not do for America, what it is, and is doing, elsewhere.

Things are, however, moving. Many stations are find-

ing it hard to keep alive. They will drop out—in the opinion of many Americans, the quicker the better; and it is to be hoped that something will be done, perhaps by strengthening and activating the machinery of the Federal Radio Commission to speed up the process. Management is tending to concentrate, and the great "chains" are extending the scope of their activities in proportion to the increasing dissatisfaction with the output of the minor local stations. There is a growing impatience with the abuse of the ether, or at any rate with the absence of responsibility and sincerity in its exploitation. In this matter public opinion is slow of mobilization and somewhat inarticulate, but it is developing, and the more it develops the better it will be for those organizations mentioned, who are equipped to deal with the situation in a large way and a large spirit. The two great companies will in all probability become more and more powerful. They may continue their separate existence for many years, but even so, and to judge from their present attitude, the American people have everything to gain in the process of consolidation, even though it is not unification. And even the latter is not inconceivable. Large concerns in other fields of activity in this country and in America have, within a year or two of merging, disclaimed any possibility of such a happening. Were the two great chains eventually to come together there would inevitably be an increased measure of public control, either through the Federal Radio Commission, or a reconstituted Commission made independent of "politics," or some other organ yet to be established. What would the position be then as compared with that in our own country? In all essential points the five requirements tabulated at the beginning of this article would appear to be met.

Almost all other countries in the world now have systems operating in a similar manner to the British. Many of them are endeavoring to approximate more nearly to it. There are certainly problems in America peculiar to that country, but every country has its own problems, and the Americans are not likely indefinitely to permit their shibboleths to stand in the way of their getting the best from their broadcasting service. The British system by no means involves a renunciation of the individualism so precious to American sentiment. Institutionalism and individualism are both demanded in this field. And it is the absence of the institution which is preventing the best men from doing their best work, and, at the same time, permitting others to operate without much idea of their responsibility to the public or of the possibilities awaiting the touch of a wise idealism.—*Extracts, see 7, p. 224.*



## Bellows Cont'd

actor do most of the talking, until finally the manager, rather out of patience, cuts in with what has always seemed to me the finest bit of dramatic criticism ever written: *Besonders aber lässt genug geschehn!* ("Anyhow, be sure that plenty happens!") This, in substance, is just what the broadcasters are saying to the teachers. "Use radio to teach whatever you want, in any way you want; but anyhow, be sure that plenty happens." Am I greatly overstating the facts when I say that in most educational broadcasting in this country so far, nothing has happened at all?

One other point, and an important one. We are told that the educational institutions fear the loss of independence in their teaching through the medium of commercial broadcasting. They dread the imminent blue-pencil of the radio censor, the *index expurgatorius* of the advertiser. Five years ago there may have been some reason for this, for then most of the important stations were mere departments of quite unrelated business interests, subject to the whims of owners who knew little of the problems of broadcast service. Today most of these same stations are owned and operated by broadcasting corporations, solely concerned with the needs and requirements of this highly specialized business. And the thing above all others that such a corporation wants is to avoid the duties and responsibilities of censorship just so far as it legally can, subject only to the demands of public interest. The one section in the Radio Law which every broadcaster blesses whole-heartedly is Section 18, which denies him all right of consorship over the utterances of duly qualified candidates for public office. Let any recognized public educational agency once assume full responsibility for a radio program, and the commercial broadcaster will be overjoyed to limit his rights of censorship to an insistence on maintaining public interest; the educators can say what they will, provided they do not bore their hearers into open desertion. This is plain common sense, and back of it always remains the power of Congress or of the Federal Radio Commission to do for public education exactly what has already been done for political candidates. No, the censorship bugaboo is a myth from radio's childhood days, kept alive, like all other superstitions, by prejudice and ignorance.

Specifically, what do we, as commercial broadcasters, ask? First, that the educational institutions shall collaborate with one another in formulating and in actually presenting and carrying through a program for the use of radio in education which shall be orderly and coherent. Second, that in considering the method whereby such a program is to be presented, full and intelligent consideration shall be given to the special requirements of radio presentation and reception, to the end that the broadcaster's sole basis of value, which is public interest, may not be undermined by dullness.

If the educational institutions will but do these two things—and surely the request is not unreasonable—I can speak with complete assurance for the entire membership of the National Association of Broadcasters in pledging complete and enthusiastic co-operation. Our facilities are at their disposal, if only they will help us to build up the

one thing on which our very existence depends—public interest. They can do this if they will remember that education by radio depends—first, last and all the time—on personality. Let them once clearly visualize the conditions of radio reception—the home, the family gathered round the loud-speaker—and every teacher who speaks over the radio will be ashamed to behave otherwise than he would behave in such a home. He will leave the pedagogue in the classroom, and become the friendly guide of the personal conference. Once he has learned to do this, the greatest problem of radio's use for education will have been solved.—*Extracts, see 6, p. 224.*

by William S. Paley

President, Columbia  
Broadcasting Company

THE whole basis of radio broadcasting is radically different in the United States and England. The question as to which system of control is best is still being discussed—academically—on both sides of the Atlantic. For my part, I believe that each country is bound to have the broadcasting it deserves, which is another way of saying the "broadcasting that is adapted to its needs." The British system, thanks largely to the wise policy of the B.B.C., has been eminently successful. Our system, competitive and therefore commercial, has been found just as successful. In each country we are faced with different conditions. These conditions have forced an evolution of broadcasting procedure which has given to each country the kind of broadcasting it requires.

America is traditionally hostile to monopoly and especially government monopoly—so we decided on Government regulation rather than Government control and on orderly competition rather than monopoly. It is a pleasure to me to express my sincere and unbounded admiration for the British nationally controlled and unified system. The English are a fairly homogeneous people with an ancient tradition of successful democratic control, and their institutions have grown and flourished admirably. And broadcasting has flourished as a public service, publicly administered.

Perhaps it would be interesting to know why radio broadcasting is on a commercial basis in America. Some of you may be like that British visitor to our shores, whose complaint reached my ears not long ago. He was indignant because he found himself assailed in his hotel room by all sorts of offers of merchandise and service. He was assailed advertizingly from all directions; printed cards under the glass on his bureau told him where to buy flowers, where to eat, where to get books; advised him about having his clothes pressed, his hair trimmed and what not. Wherever he went, his attention was being called to some article or service for sale. That English-

*Continued on page 213*

# by Lord Ponsonby

Member, British Parliament

THERE are, no doubt, many organizations which fail in their purpose or are insufficiently abreast of the times, because their activities are not subjected to enough public scrutiny or criticism. The B.B.C. does not suffer in this way. Its articulate critics run in numbers into probably six figures and it can, therefore, judge, in every step it takes, not only the quantity but the quality of the approval or disapproval which is expressed. It can also gauge the popularity of the various lines or the new ventures in broadcasting which it adopts. The criticism from direct correspondence, whether favorable or unfavorable, is far greater in volume and may be more important, coming as it does directly from listeners, than journalistic comments perfunctorily given by a critic to whom this job is assigned as part of the day's work.

There is so much in the detail of Mr. Warren's criticism with which I find myself in complete agreement that I was surprised to discover when I finished his article that I differed from him in his general conclusions.

Everyone must agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Warren's condemnation of indiscriminate listening, and of the objectionable practice of turning on the loud-speaker "to provide a background of noise." To hear the wireless turned on in an hotel lounge behind the buzz of laughter and conversation, to catch bars of some beautiful bit of music, in between the cackling of the loungers, is to receive an impression, not only of desecration, but of futility, which is really painful; and it is difficult at such a moment to remember that perhaps in a neighboring house two or three may be assembled together who with wrapt and reverent appreciation are drinking in every note that reaches them. Mr. J. H. Whitley, the chairman of the B. B. C., emphasized, not long ago, the need there was to guard against the danger of letting wireless listening become a mere effortless, passive habit. Mr. Warren also recognizes the need of creating a "discriminating public."

Although broadcasting has now had a good ten years of life, the amusement and delight of it as, what I may call, a conjuring trick has not yet worn off. In a little village in the south of England there was an entertainment, a few weeks ago, at which the departing vicar was presented with a portable wireless set. After the presentation had been made the wireless was switched on and the strains of a Paris opera reached us. I admit that like the villagers my prevailing sensation was amazement, and musical criticism or appreciation of the particular opera or of the tenor who, at the moment, was singing did not enter into my mind at all. On the whole, I should say, however, that discriminating listeners in private houses who know what they do not want to hear, and when they turn on what they do want to hear, listen with attention, are growing in numbers if they are not already a majority. That the machine will be misused by some people, indeed by many people, is inevitable.

But that is not a factor which need be taken into account in this discussion.

Mr. Warren's main contention is in favor of the elimination in broadcasting of the educational element, and the concentration solely on entertainment. While I disagree with his final conclusion, much that he writes as a critic appears to me very much to the point. But at the outset I should like to draw attention to a significant difference, not always appreciated, between music on the wireless which is the chief instrument of entertainment, and the spoken word which is the chief instrument of education. The fundamental objection to wireless in some people's opinion (by no means to be dismissed lightly) is the necessary absence of personal magnetism, which, as a factor between a performer, a lecturer or a speaker, and an audience, must make a very serious difference to both sides. The intangible, almost psychic, influence of a corporeal presence, whether it be the audience feeling the performer, or the performer the audience, must certainly add to the poignancy or even the quality of the pleasure received. The absence of this element in what becomes merely mechanized sound is an objection, which prevents some people from getting any pleasure out of the wireless at all. Now, curiously enough, while music is so popular the absence of this element of personal contact is recognized by sensitive musician listeners in all serious music. The soloist performer and the chamber music group feel it, the orchestra perhaps less because they have one another, and the absence of an audience is not so much felt. The speaker feels it, and that is the reason why some speakers with good voices fail because they cannot overcome the chill caused by the absence of an audience. It might be supposed, therefore, that mechanized talk would be further from reality than mechanized song or sound produced by string or wind. But this is not the case. With careful adjustment and a skilled delivery on the part of the talker, personality comes through over the wireless to an astonishing degree and I do not believe I should be exaggerating if I said that the spoken word among the more intelligent listeners (I do not mean by this necessarily the most highly educated) is more popular than the music. I do not say this to belittle the music, the splendid orchestra, the excellent concerts, the lighter dance music, or all other developments in this branch of their work, which the B. B. C. has accomplished. But I do say it to emphasize the importance of the spoken word, a far more troublesome branch of their work to control and to organize, and one that has still to be explored.

Now, should a deliberate attempt at education on the part of the B. B. C. be given up? Should its programmes be confined to entertainment? Mr. Warren would admit that it is difficult to say where education begins or leaves off. He rightly deplores "desultory instruction" and "quarter-of-an-hour snippets," and no doubt there is room for improvement in the actual arrangement of time and coördination of subjects. He hates having music explained to him and being told what to admire. So do I. But he may rest assured that there are thousands of people who prefer this sort of guidance to none. He gives a list of talks, all of an educative character; some might

*Continued on page 214*

## Paley Cont'd

man was indignant, but the average American has been accustomed to advertising all his life and takes it as a matter of course.

We use the phrase "advertising conscious" in America. I think I am safe in saying that this consciousness, whether it be meritorious or not, is certainly much further advanced in the United States than in any other country on the globe. So to us, it seems perfectly natural that advertising and not a license fee should "pay the freight"—to us an American expression—when it comes to radio broadcasting. Since we do not like either Government monopolies or Government control and since it is one of our traditions that all means of public communication should be free from such control, it follows we must find some other method of paying the bills for broadcasting facilities and talent.

We have in America some brilliant and conspicuous examples of public services privately operated, under reasonable supervision and regulation, such as our railroads and our telephones, and our people are—rightly or wrongly—deeply distrustful of public services operated on a non-competitive basis. Because of certain American conditions which I should like to outline, it is almost a necessity, if broadcasting in America is to succeed and make strides, that it be so organized.

We have a vast and mixed population occupying a vast and varied continent. To cater for 120 million people of such diversified tastes and requirements as the "tired business man" of New York and the citizen of Main Street; to the farmer of the lone prairie in the North-West and the factory hand of one of the congested areas of Cleveland or Detroit; to the film star of Hollywood and the miner of Pennsylvania, is the task that American broadcasters have to face. It is too great a responsibility for one organization, with full power, to face alone.

It is difficult, yet quite possible, for a wise B.B.C. to feel and follow the pulse of the public's taste, to strike a fair balance between praise and blame—as they have done with such remarkable success—and to formulate a policy that does justice to the country as a whole. The pulse can be felt by one central authority in England; but in America, success or failure are made evident only as the result of competition. It is the only real measuring stick we can employ. We take as our guide the free vote of the people, expressed by the simple device of "turning the button." If our listeners don't like a given program, they quickly turn that most influential of all knobs to another wavelength and in a twinkling they are listening to a rival program which may serve them better. The sum total of these turns is the index of the public's favor or disfavor and this is unmistakably reflected in the response to the advertising appeals being made by business concerns who use that particular station or group of stations as a medium of publicity.

Radio advertisers and broadcasting companies have to rely for their success on public favor, which can only be created by supplying the finest in every branch of broadcasting activity. It is the results obtained by the advertiser that determine the prosperity of the radio com-

panies and, to some extent, the quality of their programs. There are complaints, to be sure, as everywhere. Purists might object to having their favorite singer announced as being "sponsored" by the manufacturer of somebody else's favorite soap. But it is obvious that unless the singer, or whatever the programme may be, is first class, the listener will listen to some other (competitive) station, and will therefore not hear the mention of that particular product. Competition for listeners' ears is very keen indeed, and is bound to result in a higher and higher quality of programs.

We find the men, women and children of America ever more responsive to better offerings, and so does the advertiser, but meantime never has there been a more direct public control of any medium. The humblest hand or the highest can turn the dial with equal facility, and by turning reject what is offered. Knowledge of this all-powerful twist of the listener's wrist keeps us continuously keen and alert and therefore obedient to the will of the people.

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by William Hard

News Commentator, National  
Broadcasting Company :: ::

THAT both private broadcasting and governmental broadcasting are burdened with disadvantages is clear enough to the observant transatlantic traveler. Private broadcasting is tempted toward accommodating itself, for instance, to all levels of popular taste, including those inhabited by the least developed portions of the population. Governmental broadcasting, on the other hand, is tempted toward accommodating itself (again for instance) to the temper of persons in power and to the defense of existing institutions against all elements of opposition and of proposed unconventional progress.

The one certainty shared by government broadcasting and by private broadcasting alike is that they will both arouse discontent in their own countries, and on reflection one sees that British critics are like American critics. They may think that foreign pastures are all green grass; they with certainty know that domestic pastures are full of weeds.

Every country, generally speaking, puts on the air the sort of "entertainment" that historical circumstances, irrespective of the air, have developed for it. It is not governmental broadcasting, it is Germany, that fills the German air with reminiscences of the tender folk-song rather than with variations upon the elated barn-dance rhythms of "Turkey in the Straw." It is not governmental broadcasting, it is England, that gives to the British air so strong a flavor of the English tradition of witty drawing-room comedy. It is not governmental

*Continued on page 215*



Ponsonby *Cont'd*

appeal to certain listeners, others to a different set of listeners. You cannot generalize; not only the subject but the personality and skill of the lecturer must be considered. Sir Walford Davies received a letter from a man who told him he by no means understood all the lecturer said, but he never had and never would miss one of his talks. These talks were educative, but I would say also entertaining. I am not sure that the best education has not got to be entertaining. I am a poor linguist, but such knowledge of languages as I have I learned largely by going to the play. Take reviews of books. I know people who listen in before making up their library list. Political talks, says Mr. Warren, are "all very mild and dignified." I think they have been hitherto. I did my best to warm them up recently, and so did Lord Peel, and between us we certainly stirred up emotions in the listening world. Whether our talks were educative or entertaining I will not venture to decide. But I know that I have found myself being educative without any intention of being anything more than mildly entertaining and I have had letters pursuing a certain theme further, asking for information on some allusions, commenting on some criticism; in fact, showing a most intelligent interest in the talk in question.

In order to receive education properly it is not necessary to sit down at a table, pen in hand and notebook open, and to remain there for an hour and a half. Education can reach one by many chance and devious ways. Reading is, however, absolutely essential, and by the wireless you can hear on the subject in which you are interested exactly what you ought to read. Broadcasting cannot, and does not, set out to supply in full measure, the arduous course of study necessary for the mastery of any subject in the world. But it can, and, to my mind, does, open doors. Knowledge of the very existence of these doors has been hidden from the great mass of the people who do not know how and when to attend real lectures, who do not know the names of literary and scientific periodicals, or cannot afford to buy them, and who yet discover through the wireless that this knowledge can be acquired far more easily than they imagined, that the books named to them are either cheap or easily available and that a passage which hitherto they considered private, dark and inaccessible has suddenly had its door opened for them and they are free to enter.

The publicity given to the hedonists of today, who are always good copy for the picture papers, leads people to suppose that the pursuit of pleasure and entertainment is universal and unceasing. With certain people, a very small minority, it may be so, but few of them are listeners at any time. This, I imagine is what prevents people from understanding how widespread is the thirst for knowledge and how insatiable it is. I would go so far as to say that the popularity of broadcasting rests far more on the appreciation of the educative value of this amazing invention than on its capacity to give them an evening's entertainment. In fact, the mass of people look more for their favorite talkers, the subjects they want to hear and the new lights, the new tones, the new exchange of ideas they may get (new because they have

never heard them before) than they look for jazz music, comic songs, vaudeville, etc., which they can get on their gramophones or in a courser and probably more amusing edition round the corner in a music hall if they are town dwellers.

I would point out also that school broadcasting and wireless discussion groups are definitely on the increase; and the report of the Central Council of Broadcast Adult Education shows how universities, museums and other educational centres are taking advantage of this new method of instruction. This is a distinct and systematic educational effort. The idea is not to supersede the teachers but to assist them, place at their disposal authoritative expositions by high authorities on the very subjects they are dealing with in their schools. There has been an increasing endeavor, too, to bring to our notice the foreign point of view and foreign opinion, a form of education of which we are badly in need.

I will only say, in conclusion, that I consider it to be of very serious importance that B. B. C., confronted as it must be with differences of opinion and sincere critics, should do its utmost to develop and extend the educational side of its work. Some people may be bored, some efforts may fail, some mistakes must inevitably be made. But the element of wonder which will always be associated with wireless, and the marvelous power which makes a message reach the remotest cottage in the country, should not be used except for the highest purpose. This can only be achieved by a rightly adjusted combination of entertainment, amusement, beauty and instruction which can make the humblest listener feel that he is in possession not of a toy but of riches which no one can despise.—*Extracts, see 8, p. 224.*

by R. W. Postgate

British Author

THE British Broadcasting Corporation is a monopolistic body operating under a charter granted by the Postmaster General. The Postmaster General has in Parliament always taken the attitude that he cannot be held responsible for the policy of the B. B. C. It is, in practice an autonomous body—one of the most interesting examples of the new kind of Socialism—a public service corporation, permitting no private profit and as free from direct political influence as its founders knew how to make it. Its constitution may be criticized from many points of view. But before criticizing it, the public ought at least to have a chance of comparing its results with those achieved by the very different broadcasting systems in other countries.

Other forms of radio organization fall most conveniently into four main categories: (1) complete State control, of which the best example is Russia; (2) State

*Continued on page 216*

## Hard Cont'd

broadcasting, it is France, that penetrates the French air with a "Gastronomic Hour" in which the cooking of a veal chop is detailed by a sensitively literary man in the vibrant language of a prose poem. Similarly—though on the other side of the screen—it is not private broadcasting, it is the United States itself, that enlivens the American air with the world's most amusing comedians and with the world's largest wealth-attracted assemblage of eminent musicians.

It is true that in private broadcasting there is inherently a stronger streak of originality. It is true that in governmental broadcasting there is negatively a slenderer streak of vulgarity. Dominantly, nevertheless, each country gets in radio "entertainment" a fairly faithful reflection of its own civilization.

In the field of public affairs a quite different approach to international radio criticism is necessary. We speak of education under many labels. We speak of cultural education. We speak of vocational education. We speak of civic education. If education can be thus subdivided, then civic education is assuredly one of its most desirable and decisive branches. In the first book of his *Laws* Plato remarks:—

"Education which makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal of perfection of citizenship \* \* \* is the only education which, in our view, deserves the name."

Plato lived in a city-state amply experienced in the processes of democracy. He knew vividly that those processes are atrophied or perverted into economic injustice and into social failure unless refreshed continuously by an informed and competent civic spirit.

It may be alleged that everywhere today there is social failure and that nowhere is there a civic spirit adequately informed and adequately competent. The question would remain: What are the contributions of European broadcasting, in comparison with American broadcasting, to the vital need thus indicated?

I was in Germany in March, 1932, during the week preceding the first balloting in the German presidential election. The German broadcasting organization is dominantly owned by the Post Office Department of the German Government. I cannot say that it suffers from bureaucratic sloth. It begins broadcasting at quarter to six in the morning and continues to broadcast till well after midnight. Its officials are conscientious, energetic, and, beyond dispute, educated. They just naturally radiate education—academic education. They radiate it to school children, in some twenty thousand schools; and they radiate it to all the adults that can endure it, and Germans are very enduring. In the week preceding the presidential election they gave air lectures on "The Social Question in Industrial Relations," on "The Departure from the Gold Standard," etc.

These performances in the background of political action were profuse and meritorious. I waited, though, for the foreground. I waited for the fulfillment of all this civic educational preparation. I waited for the claims and counterclaims of the political parties. What I heard was education only on one theory—on the theory that

education means what I fear it too often means in Europe: the attempted pouring of a nation's mentality into moulds admired and desired by its rulers.

There were four presidential candidates. Hindenburg, who already inhabited the presidential palace, was the only presidential candidate admitted to the German air!

Hitler addressed a letter to the German broadcasting authorities pointing out to them a certain clause in the public charter under which they operate. This clause enjoins them to "political impartiality." It is the phrase always inserted into all projected plans for safeguarded governmental broadcasting. "Political impartiality!" In the name of political impartiality Hitler demanded access to the German air.

The broadcasting authorities consulted the Minister of the Department of the Interior of the German Government. They were then obliged to inform Hitler that the Minister of the Department of the Interior had now decreed that politics should henceforth be excluded from the German air, during the remainder of the period of presidential politics!

In Europe, in general, the governmental air is the private kennel of the political top-dog.

British broadcasting is in theory one thing and in practice quite another.

In theory the British Postmaster-General is the dictator of British radio. He licenses the British Broadcasting Corporation to have a monopoly of all British broadcasting. In the charter through which he thus licenses it he explicitly declares: "The Postmaster-General may by notice require the British Broadcasting Corporation to refrain from transmitting any broadcast matter specified in such notice."

He also, in that same charter, explicitly declares: "The British Broadcasting Corporation shall transmit any matter which any department of His Majesty's Government may require to be broadcast."

That is the theory; it may some day be the practice. It is not the present practice. The present practice is Sir John Reith, the head of the British Broadcasting Corporation. You never know a British institution by examining its law. You have to meet its man.

Sir John is in practice the effectively absolute autocrat of the whole British air. He wields, substantially, the centralized, omnipotent, benevolent radio power that some progressives among us think ought to be wielded. He should, of course, in accordance with that thought, be a progressive. He is in fact a true-blue, conscientious, intense conservative.

Sir John has openly denounced the demagogic heresy that in radio the public should be given what it wants. He gives it, overwhelmingly, what Sir John himself thinks personally (and uniquely) that it ought to have. He thinks that it ought to have a great many elevating talks. One is impressed by the multitudinousness—and magnitudinousness—of these talks.

Sir John believes in education, in academic education, voluminously.

Continued on page 217

Postgate *Cont'd*

ownership of stations, whose time is then leased to private enterprises; this can best be studied in France; (3) allocation of wireless stations and time to various specially formed societies, which is the Dutch system; and (4) pure private enterprise, which obtains in the United States.

So large a number of Russian stations are to be found among the long-wave stations that it is fairly easy for the English listener to get them despite their distance. Moscow Comintern broadcasts on 1,481 metres, and Moscow Popoff on 1,103 metres. Both of these can occasionally be got in London; Leningrad on 1,000 metres and Moscow Central or Trade Unions (1,304 metres) are easy to get. Both of these last radiate programmes addressed especially to English listeners. The Leningrad programmes are announced in almost unintelligible English and continually crossed by Morse signals. The Moscow programmes are announced and often delivered in the English of Australia or of East Ham (it may be disputed which). The lectures are dull and unconcealedly biased; the concerts are poor, their most characteristic items are modern compositions by Russian proletarian musicians, frequently the settings of revolutionary recitations. These are interesting, but interesting rather to the social student than to the musician.

The French stations, though usually State owned and leased out, are individual and diverse. Those most easily heard in England are Radio Paris, Eiffel Tower, Radio Toulouse, Bordeaux-Lafayette and Strasbourg. There are many other less-known stations, such as the short wave Radio Beziers which is devoted to the interests of the wine trade and frequently describes the beneficial effects of drinking alcohol. But the five chief stations show certain common characteristics which mark them off, generally unfavorably, from the English stations. In the first place, their most valuable hours, such as the mid-day hours of Sunday, have been wrested from the French nation altogether. Various English companies—gramophone companies, and even cigarette manufacturers—purchase the peak hours and radiate programmes openly addressed to English audiences. Secondly, each item is punctuated by advertisements, offensive or inoffensive. An unpleasant shock is given to an English listener when, after a lecture or concert, a bell is rung and he is asked if his teeth trouble him. Thirdly, we notice that there are very few experimental or unusual transmissions, either of music or drama, since advertisers are not convinced of their pulling power. Finally, as expenses have to be kept down when advertisers are not forthcoming, there is an utterly disproportionate amount of gramophone music—generally cheap and nasty—transmitted, which covers in the case of certain big stations as much as 40 per cent of the total transmitting time.

The time of the Dutch stations of Huizen and Hilversum is divided among various associations of listeners. These societies are V. A. R. A. (the Workers' Radio Society), V. P. R. O. (Liberal Protestant Radio Society), K. R. O. (Catholic Radio Society), N. C. R. V. (Christian Radio Union), and A. V. R. O., the non-partisan society, which is the most important. Each of these

societies has but a limited time, and is on tiptoe to make the best use of it for its propaganda. There is thus a disproportionate number of talks or of religious items. The musical items, although V. A. R. A. has had some good de Groot concerts, are of an uninteresting kind. These strictures, it is true, do not apply to the A. V. R. O. programmes, which reach a high level often comparable with that of the B. B. C. But this high level, it should be remembered, is largely due to the fact that the other societies have claimed for their own the items which are the most difficult problems for broadcasting directors—tendentious talks and religious items. A. V. R. O., on the ground that the other societies have enough of these disputable features, can build up a programme which ignores them.

None of these three systems, judged either by principles or by results, has any claims to superiority over the B. B. C. system. There remains the American system of pure private enterprise, which has led in the States to the erection of over 600 stations. It is not possible to give even the most brief account to cover such a diversity of voices. My own experience is limited to the dozen and a half New York and dozen odd Philadelphia stations. My listening extended over seven months, and rather more than one of these was almost wholly given to listening. I was struck by an illness which affected the eyes but not, I believe, the brain; I had scarcely any friends in New York; my mind and body were in that calm and yet febrile state of convalescence, with abnormally acute senses and yet empty of desire, in which I was content to lie and watch the patch of the sun on the ceiling appear, spread, move, change color and vanish, and to listen to a portable wireless set just in reach of my hand. I heard everything that one set could hear—from early morning calisthenics to late night speeches in praise of President Hoover.

I found at once a great advantage that the United States system has over the B. B. C. There was always something on. It might be only gramophone records or two decrepit comedians who could get no other jobs, but at least there was something to distract invalids (the people most in need of the wireless), and not those vast silences of the mornings and the week-ends which the B. B. C. permits. It is not generally realized how fantastically small is the entertainment offered by the B. B. C. in the mornings. The total is, nearly invariably, this: A weather forecast, a very brief and mechanical Anglican service, and a fifteen-minute household talk, often much below the usual B. B. C. standard. Sometimes there is a Baird television broadcast, which only a score of wealthy experimenters can receive. At noon there comes on a cinema organ. New York is better served. Another item which is to be put to the credit of America is that the income of certain stations is so great that they can pay higher fees than the B. B. C. would ever think of, and consequently can call upon more world-famous artists.

But there are a great many items to be written in upon the debit side. Each station leases its time by hours or

*Continued on page 218*



## Hard Cont'd

Sir John Reith, however personal he may be, and however independent, in his management of the British Broadcasting Corporation, has a "responsibility" to the governmental ownership—to the state organism—behind him. He must, therefore, proceed cautiously, he must give consideration to reasons of state, in admitting guests to his bureaucratic and authoritative ether.

He must, for instance, himself choose the university professors who on that ether will dispense academic political education. They choose their academic guest speakers proficiently. They remain, nevertheless, the performances, not of Britain's academic world speaking for itself, but of selected academicians put on the stage—and permitted their lines—by a centralized radio directorship and dictatorship.

I doubt if the academicians of the United States would care for it—very long. They are not accustomed to being "directed" very much by their radio hosts. In America the radio company furnishes the microphone and the telephone cables to the receiving and sending stations. That is its sole duty. That is its sole "responsibility." It aims only to let the American political-science academic world say its say. It lets it orate as its spirit may move it to orate. It has no "responsibility"—except that of lending facilities of utterance to American academic thought as America itself has formed it.

Every governmental radio organization, no matter how constituted, and no matter how operated, must lean in the end toward accepted and dominant national political practice and political theory. Hence its timidity, its demonstrable timidity, not only in domestic politics, but also—and most especially—in world affairs.

The American private air is very open to authoritative political foreigners. The European governmental air is open to them extremely charily.

Let me illustrate. All European countries of any importance have radio systems. Seven of them (outside Switzerland) took broadcasts from Geneva during the Disarmament Conference's first period—only seven. Britain heard no foreigner. Austria and Sweden likewise heard no foreigner. France alone heard more than one foreigner. It heard numerous foreigners; but it did not hear them as we Americans heard them, personally epitomizing their whole national philosophies.

The total number of broadcasts, during the Disarmament Conference's first period, from Geneva to all European countries (outside Switzerland), combined, was forty-one. The total number of broadcasts, during that same period, from Geneva to the United States alone, through the American company which I represented, was thirty-eight; and there was simultaneously present at Geneva another American radio company broadcasting to the United States at the rate usually of two programs a week.

I must confess that I sometimes deeply resent the European charge that American radio is dedicated solely to programs of so-called "commercialization." When American radio meets European radio in the only field of possible direct comparison—the international field—it is

not European radio, it is American radio, that proves its superior interest in non-commercial public affairs and in instant world-wide political international education.

Governmental broadcasting, since it is supported by the state, must be careful not to offend the state and must, therefore, while it escapes "commercialization," embrace "governmental responsibility"—and a censorship far beyond any "control" known among us.

I have introduced a multitude of European statesmen to the American air. Never have I asked them, and never have I been asked by my organization in America to ask them, what they were going to say. They were responsible men; and, on the license of that responsibility, they spoke without any attempted check whatsoever.

Relatively seldom, I must admit, does a European broadcasting organization reciprocate our American hospitality to European public personages. Occasionally, however, I have introduced an American statesman to a European air audience. In each instance I have been obliged to submit the text of his remarks, beforehand, to foreign governmental or quasi-governmental agents for scrutiny and approval.

Radio, monopolistically controlled for the purposes of persons in power, can be made the most effective agency ever devised for the enslavement of the mass mentality of a nation.—*Extracts, see 9, p. 224.*

## by C. Henry Warren

British Author

THE broadcast programmes of the British Broadcasting Company are planned for a discriminating public—and this is all to the good. The B. B. C. has gradually won for itself a position whereby it is able to command the best brains for the entertainment of its listeners. It has acquired an orchestra which is not only the best in the country, but one of the best in the world. And it has on its staff men of imagination, enthusiasm, and a high degree of intelligence. What, then, is wrong with broadcasting? It should surely be a model service of national entertainment.

"Entertainment": there's the rub. The B. B. C. is a dignified institution. Dignity, in fact, would almost seem to be an obsession with it. Its attitude to the outside world, for instance, is so dignified that after ten years its activities still remain cloaked in a good deal of mystery. An organization which chooses to cloak itself in mystery is usually conscious within itself of the necessity to hide something from the public gaze. But the B. B. C. has no such necessity. It quite sincerely wishes (as it is careful to inform us at frequent intervals) to act up to its duty as a public service; but at the same time it seems equally anxious to keep the public at a

*Continued on page 219*

# Postgate Cont'd

fractions of hours to advertisers, and the advertisers select the programmes, subject sometimes to a gentle censorship. They naturally always make the best financial use of their allotted hour, and almost invariably pick upon the most conventionally popular items. Once-in a while an eccentric advertiser may try something out of the way, but this effort passes almost unperceived in the vast flood of mediocre "popular hits" and well-established musical "favorite numbers" which pours out from the American transmitters.

The most powerful stations, such as WABC, WJZ, WEAf and the whole Atwater-Kent chain, exercise severe limitations upon the direct advertising that they allow. But the weaker stations dare not do this, and the most grotesquely offensive matter is sometimes broadcast. The publicity matter of "The Brassiere You Love to Cuddle" was sufficiently startling to an English ear, but it was outdone by a programme in which "Roses are Blooming in Picardy" and a series of similar songs were sung, one after another, by the directors, managers and department heads of a Jewish fur-store. Odd, too, was the following announcement: "This is station —, New York, calling. In a few seconds you will hear the eleven o'clock time signal. This will be given by the Blank leverless rolled gold watch, price five dollars, obtainable at all reputable department stores. Ping. That was the Blank rolled gold watch, obtainable, etc., etc."

Finally, it is to be observed that a recent report, described in the *New Republic*, indicates that some of the smaller stations have now no listeners at all. "Keyed" advertisements apparently proved that systematic production of the worst possible programmes had so discouraged listeners that nobody intentionally ever switched on to them. Private enterprise had run its full course in producing stations which had actually no function at all, except that of defrauding certain advertisers.

The results of adopting the American system in Great Britain would probably therefore be (1) an increase of the number of stations (which is not entirely a benefit); (2) a vast decline in the general quality of programmes; (3) the broadcasting of certain very expensive items now unobtainable; (4) the ending of certain of the best B. B. C. features, such as the symphony concerts, the educational broadcasts, and the talks; and (5) a great deal of very offensive advertising.—*Extracts, see 10, p. 224.*

by Tracy F. Tyler

Secretary, National Committee  
on Education by Radio :: ::

AMERICAN broadcasting practice naturally results in two types of programs, the sustaining program and the sponsored one. The sustaining program is one prepared and presented by the broadcasting station or chain or by a public agency. The control of this type

of program, therefore, rests entirely with the broadcasting station officials. If these officials are of the best type and have a knowledge of the needs of the public for proper broadcast material, the programs may be most excellent and worth while.

A sponsored program, on the other hand, is controlled in an entirely different manner. The advertising agency or the advertiser himself or both after purchasing a specific hour for a broadcast, have final authority as to just how that hour is to be used. Naturally an advertiser wants the best hour he can secure. It is not surprising, therefore, that under the American broadcasting practice, sponsored programs occupy the best hours of the evening when the largest audience can listen. Since the advertiser controls the content of his program there is no definite integration or purpose behind the combined offerings of commercial broadcasting stations.

A problem which has been troubling broadcasting people for some time is the matter of coverage. Few people in our more populous areas realize that even with the more than 600 broadcasting stations, the entire United States does not receive primary broadcasting service—a service that can be depended upon day in and day out. One reason for this inadequate coverage is the fact that under a commercial system stations are placed where the most advertising business can be secured. This results in the clustering of a large number of stations around our populous centers; whereas through large portions of the sparsely settled areas in the West no service at all is provided. There is very little justification for a practice which concentrates large numbers of stations in such cities as Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. Many of their programs in a single city not only throughout the day but at the same hour duplicate each other.

The trend toward monopoly is another problem which we face in attempting to unravel the present American broadcasting practice. For some time now it has been the practice of the two large national broadcasting chains to buy or lease the most powerful broadcasting stations in the various parts of the country so as to control outlets for their programs in the most populous centers. The problem would not present so much danger if an unlimited supply of broadcasting facilities existed. As it is, broadcasting is severely limited since there is little prospect of more facilities being found. Consequently, the more stations which come under the control of these large broadcasting companies the greater becomes the danger of a private commercial censorship not only over the dissemination of information but on the cultural life of the people and consequently upon their attitudes and ideals.

Even William Hard, who as a representative of one of the broadcasting chains in the United States, naturally leans toward a continuance of the American practice, in a recent article concluded that British radio offered more for education than did our own country. His criticism was that an insufficient opportunity was offered for free, uncensored political discussion. Mr. Hard will, no doubt, be happy to learn that beginning in August, 1933, Great Britain will permit members of various political parties

Continued on page 220

Warren *Cont'd*

proper distance. Familiarity, it would seem to fear, might breed contempt.

For this obsession with dignity not only affects the B. B. C.'s attitude to the outside world, it also affects its attitude to the programmes. And this is a far more pertinent matter. Broadcasting, when all is said, is an entertainment; and that (to judge by the programmes) is just what the B. B. C. refuses to admit. There is an undignified sound about the very word "entertainment"; it immediately suggests vaudeville (incidentally, the one branch of the broadcast programmes which, from the beginning, has remained notoriously bad) and such-like loose-moraled pastime. Now, as we all know, the B. B. C. is very zealous for its moral tone. It, therefore, shies away from entertainment as something not quite nice. It concentrates, instead, on education. Education is so much more dignified. Very well, education is a fine thing; the public clearly needs to be educated; what better instrument is there than wireless for the conveyance of this education?—that would seem to be the attitude of the B. B. C.

But it is exactly in the adoption of this attitude that the B. B. C. is surely at fault and in danger of alienating the intelligent public which it might otherwise so easily retain. To begin with, it is doubtful whether the public desires to be educated; and it is certain that, anyhow, wireless is not at all a suitable medium for the conveyance of education. Adult education is nothing if it is not a personal affair. Even in youth, the necessary elimination to a large extent of the personal factor in education is a danger—unless we believe in the Platonic ideal that education is an approximation towards an ideal of balance, and not a development of the personality; but in after-youth such an elimination is altogether a disaster. Education that does not end by preparing us for the enlargement of our capacity for personal experience is a misnomer. At its best it is mere uplift; at its worst it is mental perversion. And wireless, as a medium for education, can never lead us to this enlargement of personal experience. It is too desultory, too scattered, too undisciplined, too mechanical.

Consider the case in regard to music. When a speaker comes to the microphone to tell us how we as "ordinary listeners" (the student of music can be left out of consideration since the talks are not designed for him) are to listen to the concert which will follow, he is virtually attempting the impossible. For no one can possibly tell us how we are to get the most out of the experience of listening to the music which is to be broadcast. Our enjoyment is a private and personal thing, dependent to a large extent upon our present capacity for appreciating music and upon our personal development; and how is anyone to tell at which stage in our development we have arrived? The speaker can only try to point out, in ten minutes, what must obviously require years of close study for its proper appreciation. The chances are that, unless we are very firmly entrenched in our own personal valuations, we shall begin by trying to listen with his ears rather than with our own, and end by not really listening at all. And if you should reply that anyway his

ears, being trained, are better than ours, being untrained, the reply is that they are still his ears and not ours: you cannot possibly borrow somebody else's capacity for enjoyment. Enjoyment that is relegated to a second-hand experience is virtually no enjoyment at all.

It is much the same with other broadcast talks. An examination of the B. B. C.'s Talks Syllabus for the winter season, September-December 1932, reveals the following list of titles: "Art in Ancient Life," "Our Debt to the Past," "Our Neighbors; Today and Yesterday" (a promising title, but one which merely serves to hide a confessed attempt to "explain the country as it is today by setting it against its historical background"), "The Worker in Industry," "The Art of Reading," "The Law of the Land," "How the Mind Works," "Christ in the Changing World," and "Science in the Making." There are also instructional morning talks, political debates and political talks all very mild and dignified, music talks (such as have already been criticized), reviews of books, the cinema and the theatre, and language lessons. This practically comprises the whole of the broadcast talks series, the only exception being the topical talks, which are not listed.

It will be seen that education is the keynote throughout. (Incidentally, it might be instructive to count the number of times the word "problem" appears in the syllabus.) It is only fair to assume, therefore, that the urgent desire behind the compilation of the B. B. C. programme of broadcast talks is to educate the listener. But it is no more possible to educate him in history, in sociology, or in literature, by means of wireless, than it is in music. It may be all very nice and pleasant to sit before your fire while someone pours forth his learning for you through the loud-speaker; but cosiness was never yet the way to learn. Education implies a discipline, or, rather, an application, which such occasional instruction almost necessarily prevents. Desultoriness is quite antagonistic to all true education; and of all forms of desultory instruction wireless, with its quarter-of-an-hour snippets of this and that, and its compulsorily long gaps between one snippet and the next, is the most baleful. The very best it can induce is an abortive enthusiasm.

The truth is, of course, that there are no royal roads to education—either by wireless or by any other means. But perhaps the B. B. C. would seek to defend itself by claiming that it does not pretend to educate the listener; its concern is with culture—the enjoyment of his leisure hours. But then, neither are there any royal roads to culture. Culture is far too personal a matter to be achieved by any such impersonal or mechanical or arbitrary devices as wireless. "Rubber-neck Tours," whereby you are rushed round a country while someone indicates the beauty-spots through a megaphone, have become a public joke: it is strange to see so enlightened a body as the B. B. C. adopting the same practice in regard to our personal journeyings through the country of the mind. (How many of the senior staff at Broadcasting House, we wonder, would listen for choice to the educational talks for which they are responsible?)

*Continued on page 221*



Tyler *Cont'd*

to speak over the British air absolutely without censorship. They will be given a free choice of subjects and allowed to say exactly what they wish. I am convinced that there are essential elements in some of the other systems which should be incorporated in a new American radio plan. Thus our newest medium of communication could be used for the benefit of the great American people whose interest in radio, educationally, culturally, and financially is far in excess of that of the present commercial companies, whose actual investments in broadcasting equipment total a paltry few millions of dollars.

Referring to the British Broadcasting Corporation, C. M. Koon, radio specialist in the United States Office of Education, says:

"... The B. B. C. is a highly centralized broadcasting organization with a monopoly on broadcasting in Britain. It has several advantages over the competitive system of broadcasting in the United States. Not the least of these is the fact that the B. B. C. can maintain a highly trained staff made up of the best specialists in the country who can plan their work very carefully, and carry out their plans just as carefully.

"Under the B. B. C. policy undue duplication of programs is eliminated. The British system also lends itself well to improvement as a result of research. But perhaps the greatest advantage of the British plan is its sense of responsibility to serve the public in more constructive ways than mere entertainment. It is this sense of responsibility that has led to the well-developed educational programs that are broadcast for adult listeners as well as the radio lessons broadcast for schools.

"Early in 1927, Sir J. C. W. Reith, Director-General, outlined the policy of the B. B. C. as follows: (a) the offering of daily variety program to meet the requirements of every type of listener; (b) the provision of clear, accurate, brief, and impartial information of what is going on in the great world; (c) In music, (i) the popularization of good music, (ii) the introduction of challenging new works, (iii) the assistance of opera to overcome the barrier that the cost of presentation has set up between it and its eager multitude of admirers; (d) the provision through entertainment of relaxation to mitigate the strain of a high-pressure life; (e) the potentialities of radio for instruction for adults and children, are able to override distance, to overcome inequalities of teaching ability, to broadcast seed on a wind that will take it to every fertile corner, and therefore should be given due consideration; (f) radio drama and the children's hour are two forms of art that broadcasting is developing as a specialty of its own, and therefore should be developed further; (g) in the field of religion, the broadcasting of simple essentials of non-sectarian Christianity."

## From the "Round Table"

Beloit College Publication

A RADICAL step was taken in respect of radio broadcasting at the last session of Parliament when an Act was passed giving effect to the principle that "broadcasting should be placed on a basis of public service," and that the stations providing such service should be owned and operated by one national company organized and controlled by the Government.

This legislation was based on the report of a Parliamentary Special Committee appointed early in the year to consider the report of a Royal Commission on radio broadcasting under the chairmanship of Sir John Aird, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, which, after an extensive investigation, delivered its findings to the Government in September, 1929.

The system which the Aird Commission found in existence was one of private enterprise, except in Manitoba, where the stations were owned and operated by the provincial government. Full jurisdiction over the administration of all radio matters in the Dominion, including the licensing and control of broadcasting stations and the granting of receiving licenses was vested in the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and the Dominion maintained a free inspection service which included the detection and elimination of interference caused by faulty power systems. There was also provision for the subsidizing of private commercial stations deemed worthy of financial assistance, but this had never been given effect to, except in the case of the province of Manitoba, where half the receiving license fees had been granted in aid of the provincial system. The number of broadcasting licenses in effect in 1930 was 78 private commercial and 9 amateur, a total of 87; and there were, in 1929, about 297,000 receiving licenses.

The outstanding features of the evidence given before the Commission were, it declares: (1) the tendency for advertising to bulk too large in the programs offered, and (2) the foreign source of the majority of programs. The reason for the undue amount of advertising is financial. The lack of direct revenue to the private commercial stations form the entertainment provided for the public forces them to resort to advertising as a means of revenue. The result is not merely an undue insistence on the merits of certain tooth pastes and corn plasters, but "the crowding of stations into urban centers and the consequent duplication of services in such places, leaving other large populated areas ineffectively served." The foreign source of the majority of programs is explained, of course, by the proximity of the United States with its largely similar language and its great development of the technical and social possibilities of wireless. Nothing impressed the Commission more than the danger of the private enterprise system resulting in tens of thousands of Canadians taking their ideas and their tone from so-called entertainments provided by foreign commercial agencies, whose sole preoccupation is to give the public

*Continued on page 222*

## Warren Cont'd

Perhaps an illustration will serve to indicate still further this necessity for considering the personal factor in regard to education and culture. There is a young woman in one of Chekhov's stories who was one day taken to an exhibition of pictures. She did not understand art; and all the pictures were much the same to her. And then she stopped indifferently before a small landscape. "Yulia imagined herself walking along the little bridge, and then along the little path further and further, while all around was stillness, the drowsy landrails calling and the fire flicking in the distance. And for some reason she suddenly began to feel that she had seen those very clouds that stretched across the red part of the sky, and that corpse, and that field before, many times before. She felt lonely and longed to walk on and on along the path; and there in the glow of the sunset, was the calm reflection of something unearthly, eternal. . . ." This tale might well be commended to the study of the responsible staff of the B. B. C. They might then imagine a few more Yulias among their five million license-holders. For there is no sophisticated culture comparable in value to the native culture based on such simple, personal experiences as Yulia's.

Whether the aim be education or culture, therefore, the B. B. C. is on the wrong track. However, it may fight shy of the fact, broadcasting, by its very nature, can never be more than a means for entertainment. And there is no need why it should aim at anything else. Entertainment is not necessarily an undignified thing, and it is certainly nothing to fight shy of. For example, it is a matter for genuine satisfaction that our finest orchestra should thus have come into being through the foresight and determination of the B. B. C. But why not leave it at that? Why seek to paint the lily? Let the B. B. C. symphony orchestra entertain us as much as possible; but leave our enjoyment of it to look after itself. If we are not ready to appreciate it, no amount of ten minute talks by experienced musicians will alter the fact; whilst if we are ready, we can surely be trusted to take from it all that we are able and be duly thankful.

And so with regard to the other talks. With no disrespect to professors in general, it would be a good thing if they were kept away from the microphone to a far larger extent than they are at present. If they continue in their endeavor to turn wireless into a "University of the Ether," soon we shall all be so anaemically educated that there will be few left among us capable of enjoying any mental or spiritual experience at first hand. Unless, of course, we decide to ignore the wireless altogether. And that would be a great pity.

By the adoption of a more objective attitude, then, the B. B. C. would be much more likely to retain its hold on those intelligent listeners whom, at the moment, it is very much in danger of losing. We do not want to be educated, nor do we, as responsible adults, look to be muffled in the painful atmosphere we thought we had escaped on leaving our classrooms. But we do ask to be entertained.—*Extracts, see 8, p. 224.*

by Dr. Herman S. Hettinger

Member of Faculty, Wharton  
School of Business, U. of Pa.

THE Canadian system is especially worthy of consideration in an evaluation of the listener service rendered by various systems of broadcasting in use throughout the world. Not only does it represent a compromise between the American system and the European type of broadcasting, but also, because of its being contiguous to the United States, is of the greatest interest to American broadcasters. Until recently the Canadian system was one of private enterprise, similar to that of this country. However, during the summer of 1932, the report of the Canadian Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting recommending government ownership and operation of stations, was adopted by the Provincial Parliament. A commission of three members was created to supervise broadcasting and to produce the necessary programs. Advertising was not prohibited, but was limited to 5% of the entire program time.

The Royal Commission's report is an interesting one and reveals the motives which dictated the action of the Royal Commission and Parliament. The report states as its first conclusion that, although there is a diversity of opinion regarding many factors in the radio situation there is unanimity on one fundamental question—"Canadian radio listeners want Canadian programs." This, says the Commission, has not been done by private enterprise. Stations are located in urban centers and do not give rural coverage; there is too much advertising, and a duplication of service. The Commission continues that the majority of programs heard are from sources outside of Canada, and that their continued reception will tend "to mould the minds of the young people in the home to ideals and opinions that are not Canadian."

It is quite easy to see the rising tide of Canadian national consciousness in the report. It was American programs and advertising which crossed the border and entertained the Canadian audience. This in turn, must have fostered the sale of American goods at a time when Canada was becoming more and more intent upon the development of her home markets. It is rumored that there were other factors operative in the situation. Even more important than the above, was the newspaper opposition to radio broadcasting and the belief on the part of western listeners that they were not receiving adequate service under the private enterprise system. The nationalism theory wins greater credence when one examines the Commission recommendation that the Provincial Government insist upon a more equitable division of the broadcast band with the United States. This is proposed in spite of the fact that Canada has three times the facilities per capita and only one-sixth the wattage per channel as does the United States. Thus it is indicated clearly that complete use has not been made of the facilities now possessed by Canada.

*Continued on page 223*

## "Round Table" Cont'd

what it wants, because their sole objective is profit through advertising. Nothing impressed the Commission more than this danger unless it was the potentialities of broadcasting as an instrument of education, not merely in the sense of academic instruction, but in providing the right kind of entertainment and informing the public on questions of national interest. Particularly in a country of the vast extent of Canada, with so many people living more or less isolated lives, the Commission felt that broadcasting could be made "a great force in fostering a national spirit and interpreting national citizenship."

Such were, according to its report, the chief considerations "on the merits" which led the Aird Commission to recommend in favor of placing broadcasting "on a basis of public service." There was also, it should be added, the fact that it found, amid considerable diversity of opinion on various phases of the subject, "unanimity on one fundamental question—Canadian radio listeners want Canadian broadcasting."

The questions that evidently assumed the greatest importance in the minds of the Parliamentary Special Committee of 1931 were those of cost and of the best method of realizing the potentialities of radio broadcasting as an instrument of education. On the question of cost the evidence was decidedly conflicting. The Aird Report estimate was a capital outlay of about \$3,225,000 and an annual expenditure of about \$2,500,000. The sources of revenue suggested were a license fee of \$3.00, rental of time for a limited amount of "indirect" broadcasting (i. e., the mere mention of the name of the sponsor as distinguished from a description and crying up of the sponsor's products), and a subsidy from the Dominion Government of \$1,000,000 per annum. The opponents of public ownership, on the other hand, estimated an initial capital outlay of \$5,400,000 and an annual expenditure of \$5,725,000. As regards revenue, it was urged that not more than \$1,500,000 could be realized from license fees, and that if direct advertising were prohibited, the revenue from rental of time would be practically nil, with the result that there would be an annual deficit of \$4,200,000 unless the license fees were increased to at least \$7.00 per receiving set. No definite pronouncement was made by the Committee as to which set of figures it accepted, but it is to be noted that it varied the suggestion of the Aird Report that all "direct" advertising should be prohibited, recommending that advertising be limited to 5 per cent of each program period. Another consideration besides that of revenue which led to this decision was that, unless advertising were allowed, to at least a limited extent, American industries interested in selling goods in Canada would have a decided and unfair advantage over their Canadian competitors.

American experience served to confirm the Committee in the view to which the bulk of the evidence in general seemed to point, namely, that radio broadcasting is essentially "a natural monopoly," and that the only question is whether the monopoly should be granted to private interests or retained by the State. That position reached, there was, in view of the evidence, only one answer which the Committee could give—that the monopoly should be exercised by the State itself. —*Extracts, see 11, p. 224.*

## Sir Charles Higham

British Advertising Agent

I AM entirely opposed to sponsored programmes and, although I believe that eventually radio advertising in England will take its own place amongst media for selling goods, I think it will be in self-defense. If practically every other country takes to using the radio for telling the world the merits of their goods, whilst we remain silent upon ours, we have to take into consideration the idea of foreign competition on a very broad scale. But I do not think that such competition need be anticipated as yet.

At the present time, I am opposed to radio advertising from two quite definite points of view. First, from the listener's, whose reaction to the programme would naturally influence my second, the advertiser's point of view.

If I buy a wireless set, I pay an annual license fee to be entertained, not instructed as to what goods I ought to buy. Were a canvasser or a commercial traveller to force his way into my house and thrust his goods upon me, I should consider it an unwarrantable intrusion. But I consider it no worse than that I should be expected, when I switch on my radio receiver to hear the entertainment to which I am entitled, to have to listen to a similar salesmanship. The obvious argument is, that I have no need to listen. I can switch off. But why should I? What have I bought a radio for? What do I pay a license fee for? Not to "switch-off" but to "switch-on,"—to whatever form of entertainment appeals to me.

Another small, but nevertheless irritating, detail—I do not wish to hear a programme "by the courtesy of" anyone. I don't want it given me as a favor when I know very well it is my due.

With the listener holding this point of view, it is hardly to be expected that the advertiser's verdict will be a favorable one, as every listener is a potential customer.

The advertiser or the advertising agent, who if possible must be still more careful in choosing his media, has neither the guarantee that the sales talk, which follows the "sponsored programme" will be listened to (it is more than likely that as soon as it begins, the listener will switch off), nor the knowledge that the people who do happen to be listening are the people to whom his product appeals, nor the assurance that even if they are, they are not being antagonized by the method of approach.

As an advertising agent of twenty-five years' standing, any one of these objections would be sufficient for me to recommend my client to spend his money elsewhere. Advertising success cannot be built on such hit-or-miss methods. Every penny of the advertising appropriation must be directed to the right people, at the right time, in the right way. In the press, where I spend 95 per cent of my clients' appropriations, I can achieve all these ends. But "on-the-air" I haven't the slightest guarantee that I am achieving any of them.—*Extracts, see 2, p. 224.*



## Hettinger *Cont'd*

The usual governmental restriction upon freedom of speech raises its head in one of the recommendations of the Commission, which states that, "While we are of the opinion that broadcasting of political matters should not be altogether banned, nevertheless, we consider that it should be very carefully restricted under arrangements mutually agreed upon by all political parties concerned."

The early operation of the Canadian system has not been encouraging to its progenitors. In the first place, the expense has been heavy and the revenue disappointingly small. Under the plan finally adopted it is intended to build seven 50,000 watt stations blanketing most of Canada and to supplement these with four or five low powered stations. The construction cost of such a program is no less than \$3,225,000, while the yearly operation, exclusive of talent costs, will amount to \$2,500,000. Allowing for 600,000 receiving sets each of which must pay a tax of \$2.00 annually, a revenue amounting to \$1,200,000 is possible from this course. With continued depression, the receipts from taxes may fall short of this figure. In addition to this revenue the government has given the broadcasting authorities a subsidy of \$1,000,000 with which to begin operations. Some advertising revenue also will be received, the Commission optimistically estimating this at \$700,000. These sums total \$2,900,000, which is considerably short of the maintenance and capital expenditures which will be required during the next several years. Thus the financial outlook for the new system is not very bright.

The financial restrictions outlined previously came into evidence early in the new regime. In December 1932 the new Commission announced that it would be impossible for it to carry chain programs as far west as Vancouver and Ontario, one of the things demanded by western listeners. In March of the current year, however, it brought three stations in that area, though it has indicated no intention of connecting these in a network link at the present time. Other difficulties have beset the new Commission. Its first broadcast brought a protest from the musicians' unions, that non-union labor was being used, and from French-Canadian members of Parliament that not enough French had been spoken on the program. There also are rumors that the press views with disfavor the granting of \$1,000,000 subsidy to a government owned competitor. Should Canadian broadcasting succeed, and a volume of advertising be built up, the press problem will become very much more severe and may even imperil the entire system.

Thus, faced with inadequate funds, limited program resources, and newspaper antagonism, the future of the Canadian system promises to be a precarious one. Unless it can secure revenue from advertising, it is almost certain to be unable to raise sufficient funds to carry out the relatively modest plan which it has set for itself. On the other hand, if it does succeed as an advertising medium it will face increasing opposition from the press. Since the press is powerful politically, and the Commission is a minor creature of the state, it is almost certain to lose this contest.—*Extracts, see 12, p. 224.*

## by E. M. Kirby

### American Advertising Agent

UNLESS the advertiser can get at least one "selling message" across, he would not furnish radio entertainment, which, from his point of view, is created solely as a conveyance of his advertising message. Without the purchase of radio time and talent by the advertiser it is doubtful if America would have any entertainment on the air at all. Certainly the broadcast companies cannot individually afford it over chain systems, and certainly, with but few exceptions, local stations cannot furnish the caliber of talent demanded by the public. Existence of chain systems and local stations directly depends on their use by advertisers who pay a price to deliver a message to the audience aroused. Mere sponsorship is not an economic return for the expenditure.

We cannot image the Government taking over broadcasting and assessing a tax to each set owner to defray costs of talent and facilities, similar to what we understand is the British practice, let alone the development of still further bureaucracy in Government. It would result in our opinion, in a sterile series of programs because the competitive urge would be eliminated, leading straight into public dissatisfaction more indignant than has been caused by the misuses of radio in the past by individual advertisers.

The advertiser now pays for America's radio entertainment. If the listener does not like the type of program broadcast, there is nothing in the world to prevent him from tuning in another station or closing his radio.

The skillful advertiser knows that unless the listener likes his program, he will tune it out. This is making for better planned programs, the greatest feature of which is to find a program capable of eliciting the maximum attention of the greatest number of people comprising the group he is attempting to reach.

We would point out that radio as an advertising vehicle is still young. We believe we are on the threshold of a new development which will be a peculiar and natural radio technique, similar to a stage technique for drama and a klieg light technique for movies. Pressure of competition, sheer force of development, and ingenuity are the energies behind this movement. The American system is to us by far the most satisfactory, as, indeed, it is to the great mass of American people. Change it and the growth of an industry will be snuffed out. Force us to listen to what the Government wants us to and watch the toboggan in radio-set sales zoom down. Because for all its present defects, which are rapidly being corrected, the fact still remains that the listener is certain to find somewhere on the dials exactly what he wants. It remains for the advertiser to find what he wants and give it to him. That is being done. Would the Government, could the Government, do as much?—*Extracts, see 3, p. 224.*

## How Radio is Operated in Other Countries

(Continued from page 197)

**Italy.** Has nine stations (exclusive of the Vatican's). Owned and operated by a private organization known as the E. I. A. R., which has been granted an exclusive 20-year concession. Officers must be approved by the Italian Government. Revenue is derived from many sources, namely: an annual license fee of 75 lira (\$3.94) for receiver-set ownership, sales tax on all radio apparatus, annual receiving licenses on establishments, receiving tax on all communities, the amount depending on population. The E. I. A. R. must broadcast at least six hours per week programs of a didactic, economic, or agrarian nature, and commercial advertising. Ninety per cent of the aggregate revenue thus obtained goes to the E. I. A. R., the balance to the State. No limit to the time sold for "sponsored programs," but direct advertising is strictly limited by E. I. A. R. itself to 40 minutes per day. Advertising not censored, propaganda is. System is self-supporting.

**Mexico.** Has 44 stations all privately owned and operated. Privately owned stations are supported entirely by revenue from advertisements. The Federal and State governmentally owned stations are supported from pub-

lic funds. Time regulations restrict advertising. The government broadcasts educational programs to schools and adults.

**Russia.** Has approximately 80 stations, owned, operated, and financially supported by the Soviet Government. No commercial advertising is permitted except occasional announcements of an industrial (government) product. Fifty per cent of broadcasting (in 1931) was devoted to "political enlightenment," 30 per cent to artistic, 19 per cent to scientific, and the remaining 10 per cent to miscellaneous programs. The primary function being the dissemination of communist doctrines and ideas to a far-flung and only partially literate population.

**Spain.** Has 10 stations of relatively low power. All privately owned and operated, except one which is owned by the Government, and operated by a private organization. Revenue is obtained both from advertisements and voluntary subsidies from dealers and the listening public (about 80 per cent from advertisements in 1931). Government collects an annual tax of 5 pesetas (\$0.97) on each registered receiving set. A regulation limits advertising to five minutes per hour. No censorship.—*Extracts, see 3, p. 224.*

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Would Recognition Encourage Communist Propaganda in America?  
Would Recognition Stimulate Commerce Between U. S. and Russia?  
Has Recognition of Russia Proved Beneficial to Other Countries?  
What are the Basic Differences Between the U. S. and Russia?  
What are the Basic Differences Between Communism and Fascism?  
What is the Attitude of the Administration Toward Recognition?  
What is the Attitude of the American Public? The Russian Public?

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¶ These are among the questions on this subject that have  
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If the answers exist, they will be presented with arguments:

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